The Struggle for AGON

Dance and Dancers

OCTOBER 1958

This month's full ballet guide

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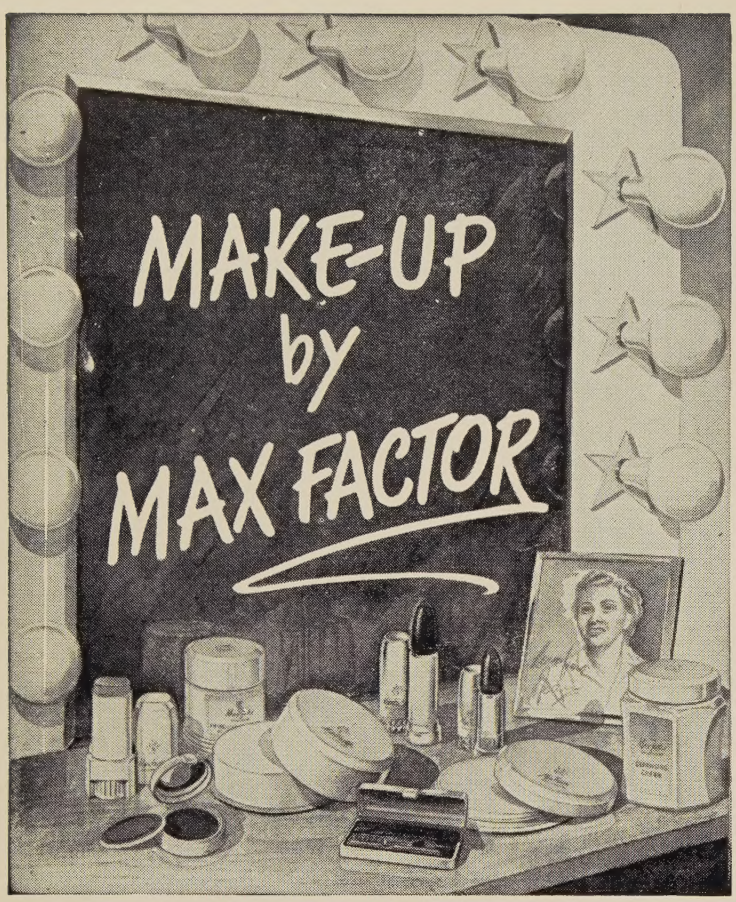

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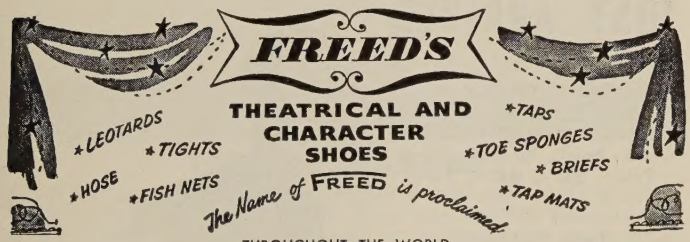

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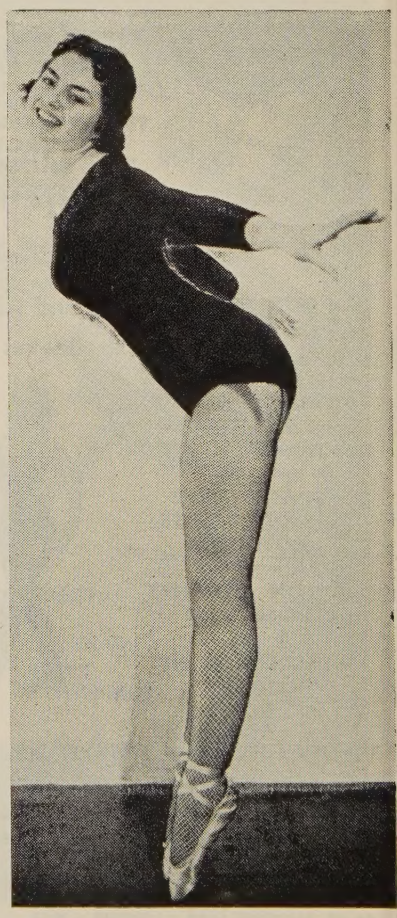

Personality of the Month

LEONIDE MASSINE

FORTY years ago a young Russian dancer and choreographer made his London début. His name was Leonide Massine, and he was then twenty-four years old. It is nearly ten years since he last appeared in London, and a whole new generation of ballet-goers are now able to see him dance — and get a whiff of the authentic magic that literally for generations has made the name of Massine stand among the highest in international ballet.

By the time this appears it will be possible to assess if the relentless years have taken their customary toll, but it appears not at all unlikely that this eternally young dancer will have escaped comparatively unscathed. He was dancing so impossibly well at fifty-four, that it would seem to require only a small miracle to leave his gifts almost unimpaired at sixty-four — or even, for that matter, seventy-four.

As a dancer his principal gift is the quality of making movement unforgettably significant. He was never a great academic technician, and even as an actor his characterisations lacked something in subtlety. But everything he did was — and almost certainly still is — superbly and supremely theatrical. Although his is a flamboyant personality, there has never been anything cheap or flashy about his work. Always one has seen the fundamental integrity of a great artist, and few dancers of this century can equal him in artistry or rival him in knowledge.

Few choreographers have long enough careers to feel the changes of fashion in ballet's climate — but Massine's record as a choreographer is long enough to have seen it all. On the death of Fokine in 1942 few commentators would have hesitated in naming him the world's leading choreographer. Now things have changed and with the present generation he would probably have difficulty in scraping into a list of the six most significant names in contemporary choreography. Perhaps he *was* once overestimated as a choreographer, yet he has always been a consummate craftsman, and his contribution — if smaller than was once thought — will be enduring.

October 1958 9th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 9 No. 10

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. MASON
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Horizons for Subsidy

NEARLY every dancer in the Western world today who puts foot upon the stage owes it to the fact that Diaghilev was. Every choreographer who breaks away from the hide-bound path of tradition, while recognising that he is still a part of it, owes his release to the same source. Diaghilev, in his time, was responsible for a whole new horizon, many new horizons, in ballet being opened up. But at that time many critics and members of the public would have been quite happy, after seeing some of the " innovations ", had Diaghilev been blasted off the face of the earth. Yet Diaghilev was in such a position that he could snap his fingers at his denigrators and, with the financial aid of enlightened and rich people, he ploughed ahead magnificently.

Today there are few rich people with the inclination to pour their shackles into the glorification of the art of the dance. Ballet, if it expects to have any permanence, is bound to be supported by the State treasury — this means *you* have to pay. Though you and I might be very happy about all this, there are many people who are not, and this leads to any and every new work being greeted, even before the curtain goes up, with " should the taxpayer have to be responsible for this thing ?" The enemies who shout this abuse are mainly too stupid to realise that in the end they benefit, because all attractions — art galleries, theatres, operas and ballets — make England a more delectable place and therefore bring foreign tourists and money into the country. They are also, alas, too dunderheaded to realise that if art stands still it most surely withers and dies.

But it makes it all very difficult for those in charge of State concerns if they have any vision at all. With the temptation to " play safe " it needs a very brave person to allow their vision to become reality. All honour, therefore, to Dame Ninette de Valois who had the courage to commission MacMillan to mount a ballet to Stravinsky's important score — *Agon*. She knew that it was unlikely to become a popular work with the paying public — it hasn't ; she knew it would arouse violent opposition from various quarters — it has ; she knew the old taxpayer bugbear would raise its clammy paw — of course it did. But she also knew that it was well worth doing and that many years would have to pass before the average person recognised its importance.

So I think that all praise is due to this remarkable person who was able to present at Covent Garden, with the Royal Ballet, all in one week — two of the world's greatest ballerinas, Chauviré and Fonteyn, as obvious box-office draws as well as making it possible for a distinguished *avant garde* work first to see British daylight. No other State-owned company in the world is able to do this and it is planning on the highest possible level.

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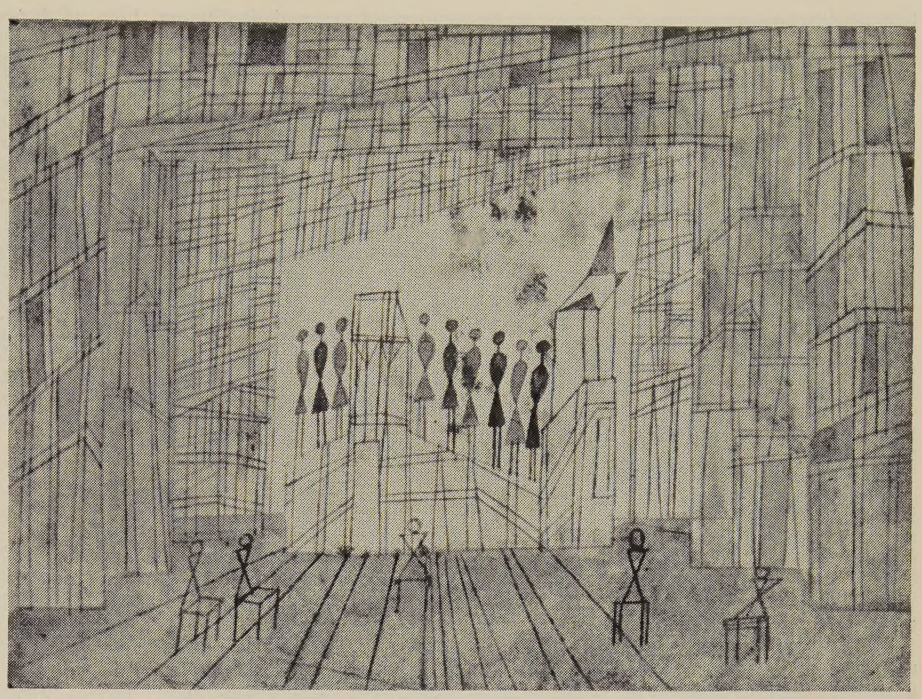
AGON

First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on August 20, 1958. Music by Igor Stravinsky. Choreography by Kenneth MacMillan. Scenery and costumes by Nicholas Georgiadis.

Cast

ANYA LINDEN DAVID BLAIR
PIRMIN TRECU
SHIRLEY GRAHAM ANNETTE PAGE
MARYON LANE
GRAHAM USHER JOHN STEVENS
DEIDRE DIXON RONALD HYND
with
Judith Sinclair Georgina Parkinson
Antoinette Sibley Doreen Wells

Photographed by ROY ROUND



THE SETTING: Nicholas Georgiadis's design, principally in tones of orange, for the Agon *set.*

AS all readers of detective stories will be aware one usually sees what one expects to see — just as long as the murderer disguises himself as a postman and arrives at 9 o'clock he will pass unquestioned and unnoticed. I think almost everyone present at the first night was expecting a plotless ballet. Balanchine's original production given in New York at the end of last year had apparently been as innocent of narrative as Mrs. Beeton's cook-book, while MacMillan's own previous sortie with a Stravinsky score in *Danses Concertantes* had produced nothing memorable in the way of a story. Finally — and most tellingly — the programme contained no written synopsis, not even one of those cleverly contrived cast-lists with which John Cranko, by a series of winks and nudges, manages to tell the audience his plot. Here surely was a ballet whose only connection with an argument would be in the newspapers the following morning.

I think I too was vaguely expecting to see a plotless ballet — the only detailed description I had had of the work before the first night came from a colleague who had seen the dress rehearsal and described it, in quite general terms, as abstract, boring, chaotic and meaningless. But when the *première* came what *I* saw could be loosely defined as a story-ballet. As in the interval following, whenever I told anyone it was narrative work I was received with the same weak hilarity that would have greeted the remark that "the Opera House was burning down", I decided to keep quiet about *my* story and not to elaborate.

Seeing the ballet again after the first night it became obvious that there were, to say the least, certain passages in the ballet that could only be seen in terms of direct literal statement. For example, two of the characters at one point put on masks, an incident which must—providing the choreographer knows his job—convey a definite statement and cannot be explained away as mere emotional colouring such as one finds in *Serenade* or *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales.*

After consideration I have decided that the ballet can be as usefully considered a narrative ballet as a plotless work. While it clearly is not a dance drama in the manner of *Pillar of Fire,* I hold that it is a work in much the same *genre* as *Cotillon* or *Les Biches* — its similarity with the latter work being, in my view, most marked.

A warning note must be introduced here. I have not got the faintest idea of what was in MacMillan's mind when he created *Agon.* I have never discussed it with him directly nor heard his views second-hand. All I am doing is describing what happens on the stage. I do know, however, that my guess about the ballet's *locale* has received

OPENING AND CLOSING GROUP: Just after their entrance and just before their final exit, the dancers get into this group.

independent support from some of the dancers in the company, and I mention this for what it is worth.

STORY

THE time is today or tomorrow or possibly yesterday; the scene is a *bordello* on the outskirts of any town. Any time, any place, the boys come in and the girls follow. Two characters in turquoise emerge—the Madam and her Mister. The kids play around. One of the boys — more adventurous perhaps than the rest — tries to jolly up the party but his dance comes out sad and whimsical. These people are a bit weary at the edges like Picasso clowns. Two girls, smiling the same smiles, gesturing the same gestures, join in the dance — the others sit on the chairs surrounding the apartment, more like people waiting a turn at the dentist than sitting out a dance. The first three finish their dance, and two boys and a girl take over. The turquoise couple — sometimes in jest sometimes in earnest — enter and depart at periodic intervals. If they seem funny sort of *bordello*-keepers, this is because they are also Greek and a Chorus.

The party goes off somewhere, but one of the boys — we have hardly noticed him before — remains, sitting with a certain stiffness on a chair. The two in turquoise position themselves behind him. A girl — dressed in the same orange as the solitary boy — also stays behind, sitting next to him. Perhaps she is older, perhaps she is tougher, but there is a touch of something like compassion in the mechanical way she approaches him.

Mechanical, automatic — this is love in the Waste Land. Boy and girl sit on adjoining chairs, on, over and around. They neck with the bashful ardour of American co-eds in a parked car, while the turquoise two watch on, now quite impassive. The love-play moves and the characters get more involved along their different lines of direction. The boy perhaps loves, the girl perhaps pities, and they dance together. They try to express what they want to express, he is like a man talking of love in the language of lust. They achieve a sort of inarticulate rapture — he is playing it for real, and her? Well, possibly by now she is as well. The girl looks questioningly at the *bordello*-keepers. They, in return, nod, and all four go off, dignified and mysterious. The entire party returns from the inner room and the time comes for everyone to leave. The *bordello*-keepers enter wearing masks, for this is not really a *bordello* but life, and they are not really *bordello*-keepers but the Fates, and the Fates are blind to humanity. They lead the girl away and the boy is left with his companions in an empty world, because that is the way it is. The struggle is over.

CHOREOGRAPHY

AGON is a ballet by Kenneth MacMillan to music by Igor Stravinsky. Stravinsky's ballet was written for George Balanchine and the New York City Ballet, and was first produced by that company, with choreography by Balanchine in New York on December 1, 1957.

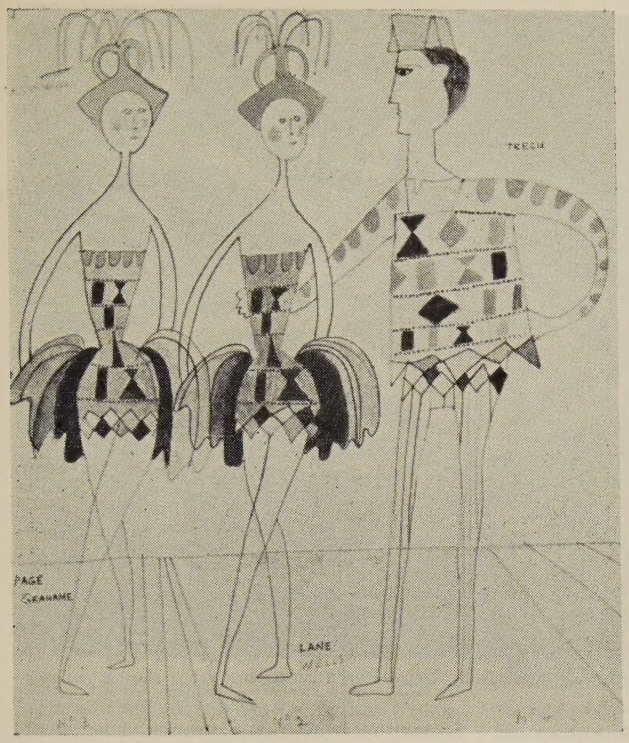
In a programme note Balanchine wrote: "*Agon* will unquestionably cause much discussion among musicians. It is planned by Stravinsky and myself for twelve of our ablest technicians: it has no story except the dancing itself; it is less a struggle or contest *(This is what the word means in Greek.* —Ed.) than a measured construction in space, demonstrated by moving bodies set to certain patterns or sequence in rhythm and melody with multiple ingenuities." Stravinsky's score is a series of musical forms derived, in their original inspiration, from a French dance manual published in the middle of the 17th century. The ballet is in three parts and MacMillan has precisely followed the structure of the score. The sequence of dances as laid down by Stravinsky and Balanchine is as follows:

Part I	
Pas de Quatre	Four Boys
Double Pas de Quatre	Eight Girls
Triple Pas de Quatre	Eight Girls, Four Boys
Part II	
First Pas de Trois	
Sarabande	Boy A
Gailliard	Girls A & B
Coda	Boy A, Girls A & B
Second Pas de Trois	
Bransle Simple	Boys B & C
Bransle Gay	Girl C
Bransle Double de Poitou	Girl C, Boys B & C
Pas de Deux	Boy D and Girl D
Part III	
Danse des quatre duos	Four Duos
Danse des quatre trois	Four Trios
Coda	Four Boys

Where Balanchine used only the twelve dancers specified in the score, MacMillan has taken the liberty of adding an additional pair to perform the link passages between the various parts, and this pair are also involved — for the most part statically — elsewhere in the ballet's structure.

It seems likely that what Stravinsky was attempting was the production of music freed from the human overtones of emotion, even though he permitted himself an occasional passage of astringent wit. In carrying out his choreography I presume, from

INTRODUCTORY FIGURES: Ronald Hynd and Deidre Dixon as the two people who introduce various phases of the ballet. Their designs, mainly in turquoise, are in the picture on the right.



PAS DE TROIS: *Annette Page, Pirmin Trecu and Shirley Graham in the picture on the right. Left is Georgiadis's design for them, which includes the costume for Maryon Lane.*

reviews, as I have not seen the original version, that Balanchine mirrored this sparseness. I have gathered that Balanchine attempted that contradiction in terms, that ultimate impossibility, the "Abstract Ballet". As human bodies will always have human associations I have no doubt that, if this was in fact his aim, he certainly failed. Yet hearing the music and knowing Balanchine's choreography, I can well believe the resulting failure was a masterpiece.

MacMillan has approached the score with no doctrinaire chip on his shoulder. He has, for the most part, adhered to Stravinsky's plan, but I suspect put a great deal more atmosphere into his choreography than the composer might have wished. This is very much his *Agon* and not Balanchine's, and he has done to it what earlier Balanchine himself did to Fokine's *Firebird,* or rather he has done just the reverse. Whether a choreographer should run contrary to a composer's wishes is a moral question I do not intend to discuss; whether the score of *Agon* can support the emotional atmosphere MacMillan has piled upon it is a more significant question to which everyone must find their own answer.

For myself I found this collaboration between MacMillan and the absent Stravinsky immensely moving. The music is not geared to the demands of immediate popularity. Although hardly "Modern" it lacks something in commonplace appeal, but there is a rock-like integrity in its laconic statement. MacMillan has visualised its rhythms and counter-rhythms in a remarkably successful manner. The choreography has just the same outer jerkiness and inner flow as the music.

How well Stravinsky's formal, sparingly coloured neo-classicism provides a departing point and basis for MacMillan's attitude of resigned futility. The *pas de deux* — inhibited almost mechanical — has the same wistful echoes of Petipa as the music, perhaps just in a fragmentary dying phrase, has of Tchaikovsky, and both men, the old and the young, at times appear to be conveying a dimly perceived nostalgia for time past.

On a physical — if you like, purely plotless — plane, Macmillan shows a beautiful appreciation of the music's structure and line. Not only does he reveal the same insight into Stravinsky's rhythms that was apparent from his first professional ballet *Danses Concertantes* — which was a far more straightforward work — but he is also successful in catching the right weight of dance to support the orchestration. The dance and musical phrases come together neatly turned, the choreography has a naturalness and spontaneity that only arises when dance and music run together hand in hand.

It really does not matter whether you put a story to *Agon* or not, its attitude to life is unmistakable, even if you notice it only unconsciously. Resignation, suppressed anger, pathos and futility run through MacMillan's work as inevitably as they run through most of contemporary art. You may not like it, but then you may not like contemporary art. You may not like its poetry, its paintings, its plays, its music, its films.

Although MacMillan is a child of his time the vocabulary of his movement is simple and innocent. Furthermore, it is getting simpler with experience, the coinages are getting fewer while the phrases are flowing with more fluency. Stylistically the choreography of *Agon* is recognisably MacMillan's, the peculiar quality of his pointwork, the characteristically sharp transitions from movement to rest, the combination of extrovert bounce and introvert slither, are all present. But gone is his early tendency to shock for the sake of shocking.

Agon is, I imagine, never going to be a popular ballet. Most people are not going to like the music for twenty years, and the box-office is not able to wait that long. It will be recorded as a failure, and the Ivor Guests of the next century are going to read in *The Times* that the "ballet is a total loss". Still, there may not be a next century, and in the meantime there is always *Coppélia.*

DANCING

AFTER nearly ten years the Royal Ballet have not yet mastered the superb Ashton/Stravinsky *Scènes de Ballet.* It would have been a remarkable thing if the same dancers had taken to *Agon* like a duck takes to *Swan Lake.* Well they didn't, so the question does not arise. Unfortunately I think they did their best, but too many of them were counting with the grim absorption of newcomers to a Victor Silvester dancing class. (Of course, perhaps they thought that was what the ballet was about — chairs, a room, a couple of dancing instructors dressed in turquoise, etc.).

In all fairness, the second performance of the ballet was notably better danced (and conducted, but that is someone else's story) than the first, but there was still a certain raggedness and lack of cohesion and, more important, attack about the dancing. Passages that clearly should have been in sharp focus were left in an impressionist blur, and not all of the dancers — this is MacMillan's fault — appeared to know precisely what they were meant to be doing. Not that the company do not dance *Agon* well, they do. But it is one of those comparatively rare works that seem to demand ultimate perfection.

Perhaps the surprise of the performance was Anya Linden as the *pas de deux* girl. She has not, in the past, stood out as a particularly musical dancer, and she has at times shown an almost agonising lack of musical sensitivity. Yet here she was phrasing well, dancing true, and all the lovely qualities of her effortless execution and classic style came across at their real value. There was also a warmth and compassion to her "characterisation" that was tender and touching.

David Blair was far less happily cast as the Lover, even though his dancing and partnering would be difficult to fault tech-

PAS DE TROIS : Left, John Stevens, Graham Usher and Maryon Lane in the second pas de trois *which leads out of a dance for the two boys, seen in* jetés *in the picture on the right.*

nically. Yet there were moments when he seemed outside the ballet, where someone more closely involved might have added to the ballet's initial impact. It was strange, but he made nothing of the impression a dancer of his calibre might have done.

Both Deidre Dixon and Ronald Hynd were excellent as the turquoise couple. Their dancing was strong, and the ironic touches of humour and far from ironic moments of menace given to them by the choreographer were all neatly underlined.

The first *pas de trois* by Pirmin Trecu, Shirley Graham and Annette Page was also, for the most part, well danced. Trecu in his extremely difficult, eccentric variation — a sophisticated version of the more exuberant passages MacMillan has previously scored for Donald Britton in earlier ballets — was altogether excellent, subtly catching every musical and choreographic nuance.

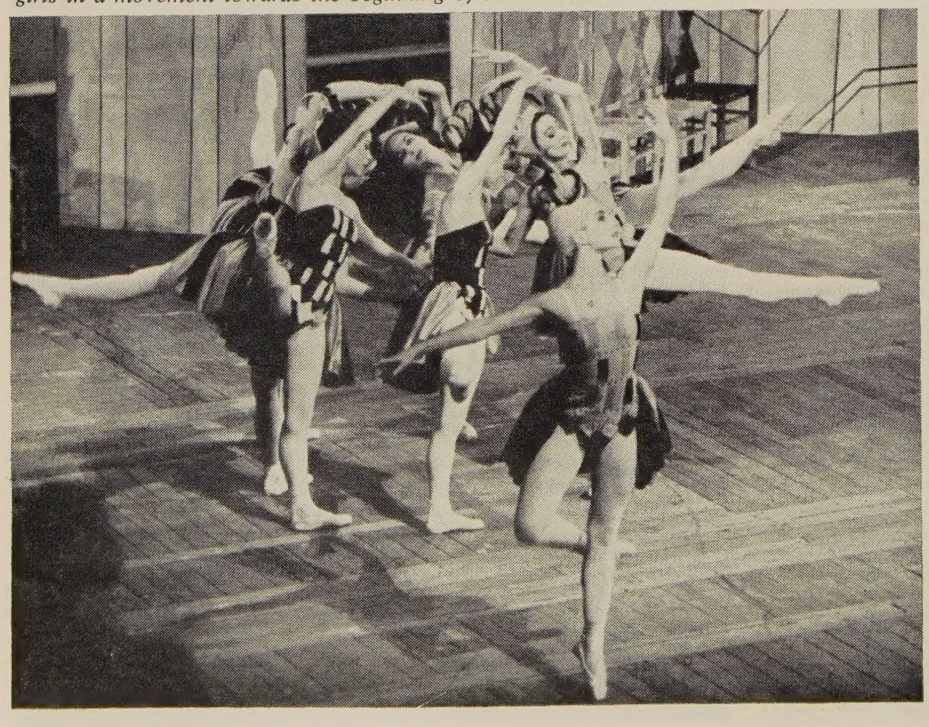
Maryon Lane effectively led the less interesting second *pas de trois,* and was well partnered by John Stevens and Graham Usher, who both showed considerable classic elegance, but despite their impressive and even immaculate dancing appeared somewhat remote from the ballet.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

STRAVINSKY'S new ballet is as much a leap into the future as was *Le Sacre* in 1913. But it provoked no riot, partly because Stravinsky is nowadays venerated as an old master whose recognised aim is to stimulate and not to insult the listener's intelligence, partly because the music's appeal is largely cerebral and it makes no violent impact on the senses, and also because audiences are nowadays more likely to be bored than shocked by anything they do not understand.

LINDEN AND GROUP : Anya Linden, showing her elegance of line, with a group of girls in a movement towards the beginning of the ballet.



Inspired by the grace and symmetry of French court dances of the early seventeenth century, he has given us a suite of dances which "create order between things, and above all, an order between man and time" — Stravinsky's own definition of the purpose of music, stated in a lecture given at Harvard University in 1946. Calling for a large orchestra, which is used sectionally to achieve the delicacy and intimacy of chamber music, the writing makes increasingly adventurous use of serial techniques as the work proceeds. Those who have heard the American Columbia recording of the ballet conducted by the composer will know to what great extent the music's subtleties of rhythm and tone-colour eluded the Covent Garden players; though Stravinsky is as much to blame for this as anyone for having over-estimated the capacities of a normal theatre orchestra for coming to grips with so difficult a score. Yet it must be stressed that the performances that have served as accompaniment to MacMillan's ballet have given most people a sadly inadequate idea of this unique and fascinating work.

Agon was conceived by Stravinsky as a completely abstract and — apart from the suggestion of a dance contest indicated in its title — plotless ballet; and when writing it he had no particular style or period in mind for the décor and costumes. It carries him an important stage further in his quest, begun in *Apollo Musagetes* and continued in *Danses Concertantes, Scènes de Ballet* and *Orpheus,* for an ever-purer style of modern classicism (he himself has never used the term neo-classicism).

Any doubt as to the eventual ability of ballet audiences to assimilate so highly concentrated an idiom may be dispelled by reflecting that children nowadays find *Petrushka* and *Le Sacre du Printemps* as

tuneful as Delibes, and that *Le Rossignol*, which once sounded excruciating, now seems quaintly picturesque.

Before it, too, passes into history and acquires a period flavour, *Agon* will almost certainly be held in awe and admiration for a great many years. If at the moment it does not readily yield up its beauties, the fault is surely in ourselves for not being able to keep up with its astonishing time-travelling composer, and even more in less than first-rate performance.

David Hunt.

DECOR

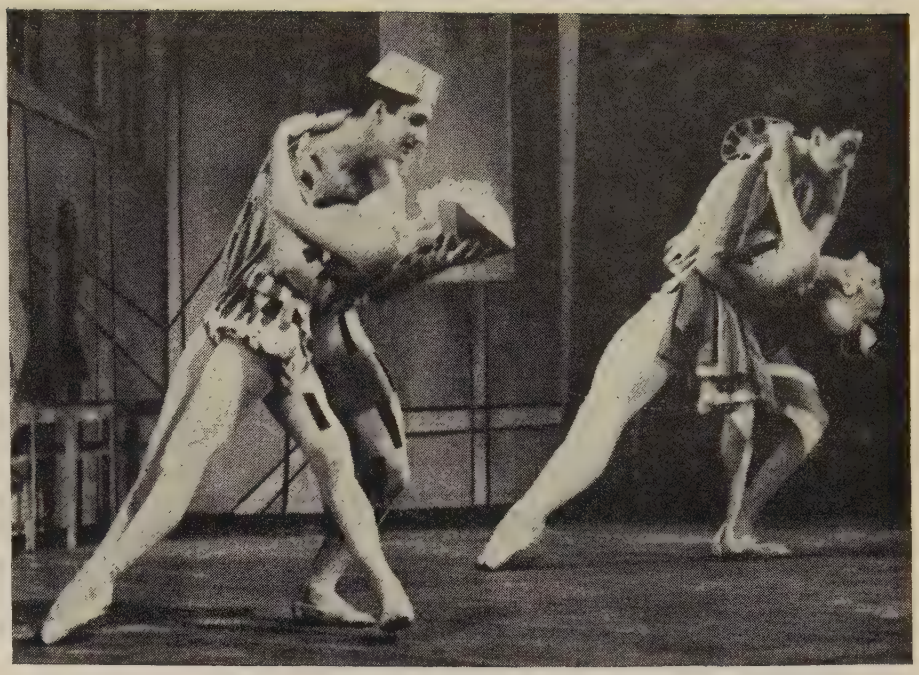
IT was Ernest Ansermet, the great conductor closely associated with the Diaghilev Ballet, who said after seeing MacMillan's *Agon* at Covent Garden that it was the first truly abstract ballet he had ever seen. He went on to say that in the last years of his life Diaghilev's sincere wish had been to have all his new creations abstract — a wish that was not realised in his lifetime. But it was obviously this seed, planted by Diaghilev, which later led to Massine's first choreographic symphonies and to what Balanchine has mainly done over the past 20 years.

So many works which are labelled "abstract" are in fact really plotless ballets, because the abstraction has not been carried through in the design and the music. Abstraction at its best, though at no moment representational, evokes an idea or a mood which can be interpreted as the spectator wishes. So it is with *Agon*, and Clive Barnes, at the beginning of this coverage, has given you an idea which you can accept or not. Stravinsky, on the other hand, suggests that the struggle or competition (the English translation of the Greek word "Agon") might have something to do with dance by labelling several of the numbers after 17th century Bransles, Sarabands and so on. By doing this he has suggested a period.

Nicholas Georgiadis in his costume designs has made certain concessions to period by introducing a definite flavour of Commedia del l'Arte. Apart from the work's other designing merits, Georgiadis has achieved something rare in ballet designing — a new line for a male costume. The five boys have paunchy Pulcinello-inspired blouses which fit into a tight waistline and which balloon-out and make interesting shapes in movement. Odd as it may seem these costumes are also very flattering because they make the hips look slim, a fact which is also aided by vertical lines and diamond shapes on the tights.

But in all the costumes there are continual references to the traditional Italian Comedy—in the harlequin patches sprinkled over the costumes for both sexes, in the general silhouette and in the headdresses. So anybody looking for further "meanings" in this work might possibly see a group of strolling players off-duty — indulging in competitive games and making love—snatching a few brief moments of respite from the drudgery of their ambulatory existence. However, be this as it may, the result is a stage picture of a distinction unlikely to be appreciated by those who only like the frills and bows of prettiness. It is a painter's design which completely reflects the apparent spikiness and inconsequence of the

Continued on page 21



MIXED COUPLES : Blair with Dixon and Hynd with Linden in a pas de quatre *towards the end of the ballet when the two principal lovers get mixed up with the two introductory figures.*

PAS DE DEUX : *Linden and Blair in the beautiful* pas de deux *against the interesting shapes caused by a lighting change on Georgiadis's set.*

First Half-Dozen in Midlothian

The great feature of this year's Edinburgh Festival was the twelve creations put on at the Empire Theatre and called Ballet Premières. Here are the first six (the second six will be in the next issue)—

Reviewed by

NOËL GOODWIN

CIRCLE OF LOVE: *A group, which includes Claudie Algeranova on the floor and David Poole at the back, from Birgit Cullberg's ballet to Hilding Hallnass music. This work opened the first Edinburgh programme. Photo: Klemantaski.*

IT looked as though the Edinburgh Festival, already defending a sticky financial wicket, was risking a fantastic gamble in its twelfth year by staking its entire dance prestige on 12 newly-commissioned ballets. A bold move in ballet at the festival, however, was long overdue to lift this aspect from languishing below the rest of the festival fare, and it could be worth courting disaster (either financially or artistically) for the sake of the rewards that might conceivably result from enterprise on this scale.

Halfway through the first innings played by the Edinburgh International Ballet — the company specially formed under the direction of Peggy van Praagh for the venture — I am hopeful about the outcome. Among the first six ballets sent in to bat, there have been a couple of ducks, but some have made respectable scores and one might be said to have pretty well hit a century. Not bad for a team of unknown quantities, and there are still six more ballets to come, about which I hope to add some further comments next month.

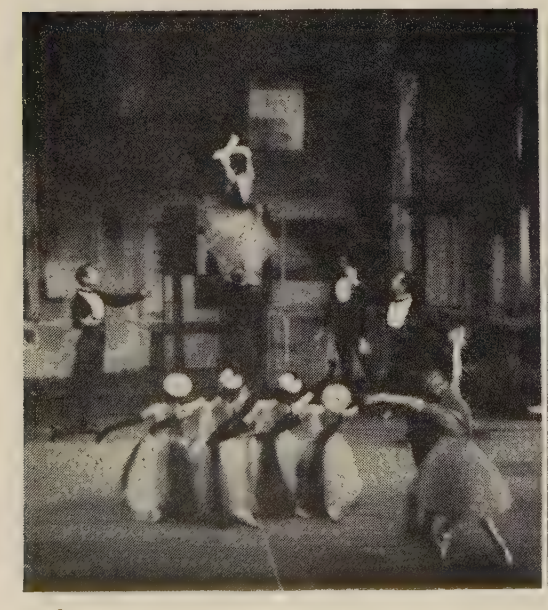
That the first six were all mounted without apparent hitch is in itself a tribute to the miracle of organisation necessary for a venture starting so completely from scratch. Apart from finding dancers of the required standard and applying them to the choreographer's demands, music had to be commissioned or arranged, sets and costumes designed and executed, an orchestra recruited and rehearsed and a thousand-and-one administrative and personal problems sorted out.

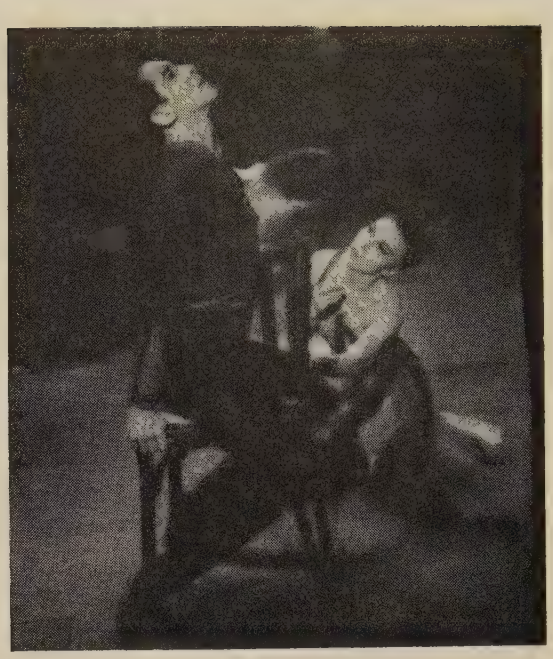
Choreographers were limited to approximately 20 minutes for each ballet. The basic company was settled at 14 dancers, with a further 19 international soloists appearing as guest artists in specific ballets. With Peggy van Praagh as Dance Director, Charles Mackerras was appointed Musical Director and Yvonne Cartier ballet-mistress. Mackerras chose an unusual orchestra of 15 solo instruments, intending that composers should write for different groups of these, but finding that several in fact asked for the full ensemble. Mackerras's contribution, both in preparing the music and in conducting the performances, deserves the highest praise. Nine of the 12 ballets were prepared during five weeks of dance rehearsal in London before the festival opened.

Meagre advance booking at the Empire Theatre steadily swelled in volume during the first week, showing that the idea had definitely caught the public's interest. To what extent the on-the-spot effects of the venture will be repeated in relation to the company's future, with a planned tour to London and various European centres, cannot be foreseen. It could be argued that circumstances were particularly favourable in Edinburgh, for most of the official competing attractions in opera, drama and concerts did not rise greatly above a humdrum level, at least in the first week, so perhaps curiosity as much as anything ensured a lively send-off to the "Ballet Premières".

They certainly gave, by their very novelty, a much-needed twist of character to the festival. The wider issues in relation to ballet generally are another matter. Michael Frostick, who presented the company in association with the Festival authorities, said at a Press conference: "We are trying to advance, but in a way that will carry the audience with us". Up to the present the

SECRETS: Two scenes from Cranko's ballet to a Poulenc score and John Piper designs. Kirsten Simone is seen in front of the left-hand picture. Kronstam and Carla Fracci are in the picture on the right. Photos: Klemantaski.





THE NIGHT AND THE SILENCE: *David Poole and Paula Hinton in scenes from Walter Gore's ballet to Bach music, arranged by Mackerras, and Ronald Wilson designs. The pictures shows Hinton in two moods, pleading and ecstasy. Photos: Klemantaski.*

audience has not had to be carried very far, because the first six choreographers have all played a pretty orthodox game.

None of them attempted any dramatic breakaway from tradition, and indeed for the first programme I began to fear they were struck hopelessly in a rut. These comments are necessarily in the nature of first impressions, reinforced by second looks at only two of the six ballets, but even so there were clearly specimens of the type of ballet from which the art ought by now to be trying to break away in the:

FIRST PROGRAMME

25 August 1958

CIRCLE OF LOVE. *Choreography: Birgit Cullberg. Music: Hilding Hallnass (special score). Designer: Sonja Carlsson.*

SECRETS. *Choreography: John Cranko. Music: Francis Poulenc (Sextet for Wind Instruments and Piano). Designer: John Piper.*

THE NIGHT AND SILENCE. *Choreography: Walter Gore. Music: Bach (Keyboard works, selected by Gore, arranged by Mackerras). Designer: Ronald Wilson.*

CONCERTO FOR DANCERS. *Choreography: Wendy Toye. Music: Joseph Horowitz (special score). Designer: Alix Stone.*

MUCH of this programme seemed an endless round of party-going in one form or another, and I longed for some gate-crashers to break up the mood. We began playing Blind Man's Buff at Cullberg's nursery tea-party, took cocktails with Cranko's ever-so-U sophisticates, eavesdropped on Gore's scene of violent jealousy outside a ballroom in the small hours, and staggered with the dawn and a bunch of curious calypso dancers into Toye's early-morning ballet class. By that time the yawns were coming thick and fast so far as I was concerned, despite some memorable moments on the way.

It hardly seemed possible that the dreary triviality of *Circle of Love* could have sprung from the same mind that created the powerfully inventive dance-drama *Miss Julie.* Birgit Cullberg is clearly capable of so many better things than a sort of *La Ronde* reduced to nursery level. Three boys and three girls blindfold themselves in turn, finding a new partner each time and each ending up, according to the synopsis, "in love with the wrong person".

There are some imaginative movements and complex patterns, but with no real point achieved in their working-out the satisfaction of watching choreographic problems overcome is frittered away. Yemaiel Oved and Claudie Algeranova (later Wish Mary Hunt) showed some distinction of style in their dancing, but nobody was helped much by the busily contrapuntal Hallnass music, rattling away like a sewing-machine, nor did the high-school party frocks and monkey-jackets and trousers against a blue sky-cloth betoken a particularly adult conception.

John Cranko had planned to do *Pierrot Lunaire* as a ballet, but this exciting project was stymied by difficulties with the Schoenberg estate. He then fell back on a slick, novelettish episode called *Secrets* — a Belgravia-type eternal triangle on the glossy magazine level. The "secrets" were pretty open ones. A husband bored with his wife throws a party, flirts indiscreetly with a decorative youngster and so sends the other guests off in a mad whirl of gossip.

It is superficial, but well-integrated in the contributions of movement, music and décor to a unified mood and style. Unmistakably Cranko is the smart, bright choreography, with its involved, twisted ensembles and groupings, dressed up by Piper in smart, bright costumes against smart, bright jazz-board décor, but with six plain chairs (dancers, for the balancing of) striking an incongruous note.

When Cranko forgot to be consciously clever about his choreographic effects (including one ugly fireman's lift and one sack-of-coals ditto), the dancing of three principals and eight *corps* managed to be both entertaining and exhilarating in a light-hearted way, and the combination of Poulenc's witty, elegant music hit off the sophisticated mood of the piece to a nicety.

Kirsten Simone from Denmark, all blonde and pink as candyfloss, looked and danced adorably as the Sweet Young Thing, and the Italian dancer Carla Fracci, flashingly dark, and scarlet and eloquent, made a fine contrast as the so-understanding Wife. Henning Kronstam found it difficult to look a bored husband while supporting her through some complicated lifts (why not drop her and be done with it?), but otherwise — and especially in an attractive *pas de trois* with the two girls — danced with the consummate style of the fine artist he has become.

Remembering *The Angels* it is perhaps just as well that Cranko did not try burrowing too deeply, but he could at least have done more than scratch the surface of human emotion. Walter Gore certainly does in *The Night and Silence,* with which the season touched its apogee so far. His ballet for two dancers on the theme of sexual jealousy and passion has nothing very original about its outline (Gore, himself, has done it before), but two aspects of the way that story is expressed bring it real distinction. One is a choreographic approach which concentrates, with powerful simplicity, on the wounds that lovers unthinkingly inflict on each other. The second is the startling and dramatic use of Bach's music, chosen by Gore himself.

The scenario is plain enough. A girl leaves a ball for a rendezvous with her lover in a room nearby. They dance their ecstasy, but suddenly the boy sees a bouquet the girl has dropped. His suspicions inflamed, he tears the flowers to pieces and brutally repels her. The more she pleads, the angrier he gets. His jealousy is such that he almost strangles her. Sorrowfully she goes off, leaving him in despair, but returns in a spirit of forgiveness. (I thought her return was something of a mistake; to end on a tragic note would have been more telling.)

Despite Roland Petit's *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort,* I was dubious at first about the contrast between the drama of violent, hot-blooded emotion and Bach's coolly logical music. But a second performance convinced me that Gore has been remarkably ingenious in his choice of music, and Mackerras both

CONCERTO FOR DANCERS: *A rehearsal picture of Wendy Toye's ballet to Joseph Horowitz music. In the centre are seen Gillian Lynn, Irving Davies, Beryl Kaye, Paddy Stone and Wendy Toye.* *Photo: Klemantaski.*

discreet and skilful in his arrangement of it for harpsichord (brilliantly played by Maurits Sillem) and orchestra. Because they avoid the obvious, the items in the score are worth noting: Prelude and Fugue in D (played in reverse order, the Fugue serving a overture); Adagio from Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C; No. 1 of the *12 Little Preludes* for keyboard; Toccata in D minor; *Chromatic Fantasia.* It ends with a reprise of the Adagio.

The ballet was grippingly danced by Paula Hinton (Gore's wife) and David Poole in a vaguely Italianate setting by Ronald Wilson. Hinton showed an enthralling range of expressive movement, suggesting ecstasy, hysteria and untold sorrow in turn. The choreography made the most of her lyrical and dramatic talent (in her faltering steps after the attempted strangling, for instance), and Poole was no less compelling in his intensity and partnered her excellently. Much of the fascination derived from the sudden stillness which, like the silences in Wagner, achieve more dramatic point than any amount of movement, while the effect of using Bach's music not merely accompanied the laceration of human feelings but soothed them in an intensely moving aura of consolation. This is one ballet I should be certain not to miss on another occasion.

Wendy Toye's *Concerto for Dancers* need not have been so much of an anti-climax if she had achieved some coherent point with it. A group of calypso dancers (Toye was one of them) intrude on a formal ballet class and swap a few steps. The scene changed to a bright West Indian, coconut-and-bananas setting with the ballet dancers occasionally darting in and out among some rather dim calypso sequences, returning to their own studio at the end.

There was little attempt at conscious humour, either by way of imitation between the two teams or in any other fashion, neither did the different styles of dancing reveal much integral art. The germ of a good idea is there for a ballet on the revue-level, but Toye never developed it or gave it meaningful shape and form. Some imaginative designs by Alix Stone were not enough to compensate either for the thin, eclectic music of Joseph Horowitz or for the lack of purpose in the choreography.

LES FACHEUSES RENCONTRES: *Alwyne Camble was responsible for the Arsène Lupin libretto and this setting for Skibine's ballet. Lupin (Skibine) emerges from the safe when the adventuress (Tallchief) thinks she has tricked the drugged Baron D (Max Bozzoni).*

SECOND PROGRAMME

28 August 1958

LES FACHEUSES RENCONTRES. *Choreography: George Skibine. Music: Jarre (special score). Libretto and Designer: Alwyne Camble.*

OCTET. *Choreography: John Taras. Music: David Wooldridge (special score). Costumes: Elaine Bromwich. Scenery: John Diebel.*

AFTER the Gore and Cranko ballets had been repeated to introduce the second programme, it was a joy to welcome back to these shores George Skibine and his wife Marjorie Tallchief, although I could have wished for something more worthy of their talents than the piece of light frivolity which Skibine had created for them. Its only excuse was as a peg on which Tallchief

could hang her eupeptic vitality and considerable technical skill.

She was presented in the guise of an adventuress cocotte from Maxim's in Paris, who accompanies the Baron D. back to his flat (while his wife is away) solely to steal the Baroness's jewels. After a fairly successful stab at playing funny in the opening scene with Max Bozzoni as the Baron, she drugs him, strips off her swathed orange skirt and plumed hat down to all-over black, but finds when she searches for the jewels that Arsène Lupin (Skibine), the Raffles of French fiction, has got there first.

Cue for seductive *pas de deux* with Skibine, Tallchief displaying her long-limbed artistry to dazzling effect. Eventually Arsène Lupin stupidly succumbs to the same ruse and is drugged in turn, leaving the way clear for the girl to make off with the jewels. Cue for triumphant *pas seul* by Tallchief with the jewels dripping all over her, less one unmanageable tiara which, in the interests of terpsichorean display, she leaves behind. Despite the catchy pastiche of *bal musette* music gone sour by Jarre, the thread of story was all very silly and unnecessary when a straightforward *divertissement* without frills would have served the same purpose just as well, or better.

BITER BIT : Tallchief and Skibine in the pas de deux *from* Les Facheuses Rencontres *when the jewel thief, having tricked the Baron, also manages to trick Arsène Lupin.*

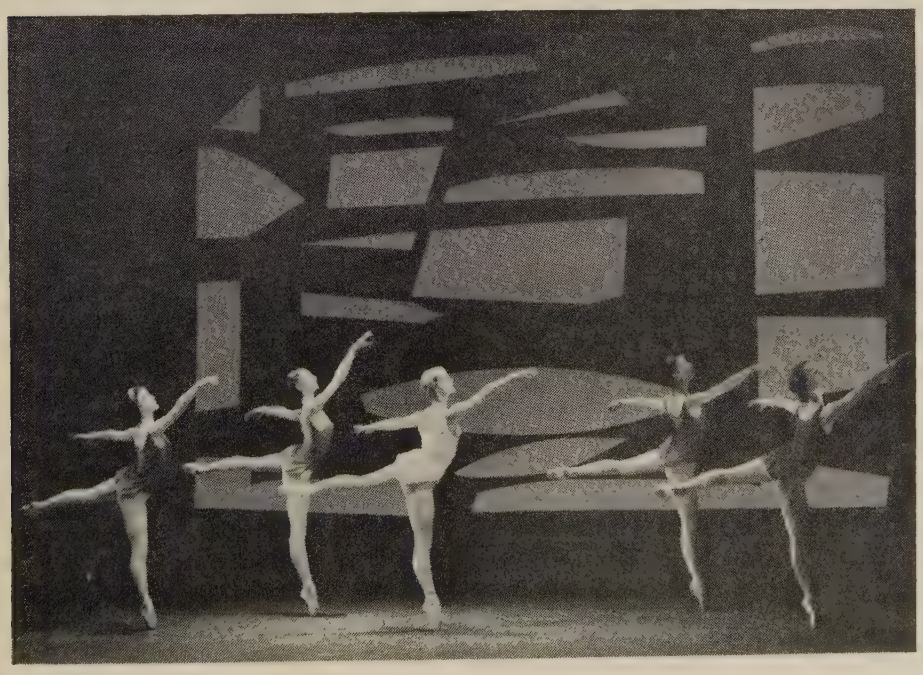
As in his *Designs with Strings* Taras attempted a plotless choreographic study in *Octet* with some vague suggestions of human emotions of the boy-meet-girl sort. It is possible that, with only one full rehearsal with orchestra beforehand, the ballet was still in an unsettled state at the first performance, but it seemed to me that the choreography lacked inventiveness and real distinction. It was broken up into too many small episodes of solos and ensembles without a sufficiently strong connecting thread.

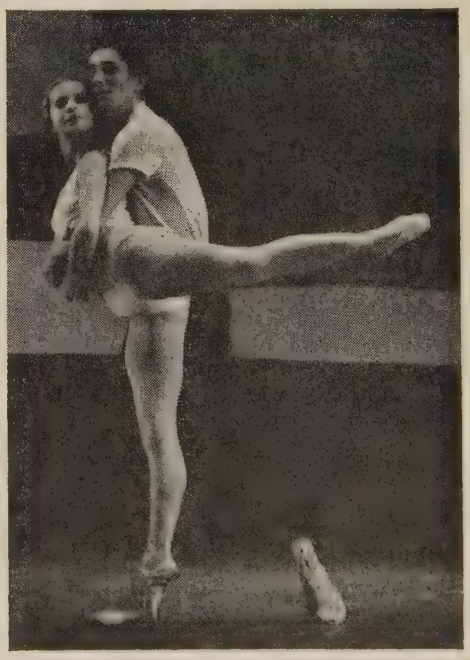
Henning Kronstam worked hard to justify it and his fluent elegance was again admirable to watch. Simone lacked a matching fluidity of line as the principal girl, and the six supporting dancers (four girls, two men) were hampered by horrid costumes as they appeared and disappeared in various permutations of numbers, contriving sometimes to keep the principals apart, sometimes to bring them together, but all to no apparent purpose. Diebel's jaggedly patterned backdrop was symbolic of the figure eight, I was told, but for the life of me I could not see why. The music by Wooldridge (a composer unknown to me) had a curious self-conscious twist to it as though he was striking an attitude that did not come naturally to him ; its thematic material was not very distinguished, but it was eminently danceable and most effectively scored for the full orchestral ensemble.

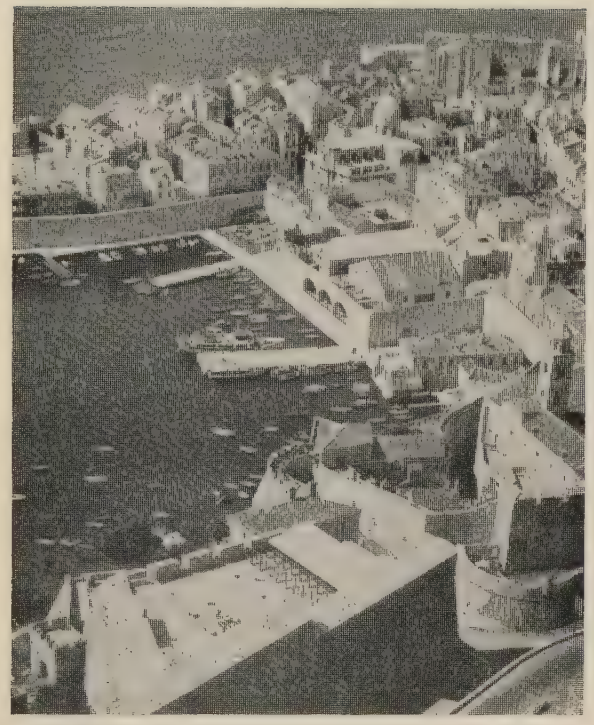
So much for the first half of the season. There was a good deal to enjoy, but I own to some feeling of disappointment that so much of the choreographic invention resembled playing at ballet rather than the adult perception that should have been forthcoming with such a wide-open opportunity as this. Here was a chance for choreographers to show the range of their talent in some penetrating comment on art and society of today. That they have so far chosen only to bask in fanciful daydreams imposes no strain on their public, but likewise adds nothing to the stature or scope of the art. It remains to be seen what the next six will bring.

OCTET : *Two scenes from John Taras's ballet, to David Wooldridge music and John Diebel designs. Kirsten Simone is seen with the* corps de ballet *in the left-hand picture, and with Henning Kronstam in a* pas de deux *in the one on the right.*

Photos : Klemantaski.







By the Adriatic Waters

Festivals in Dubrovnik and Split

Reviewed by E. C. MASON

DUBROVNIK: The beautiful Adriatic port, whose thick encircling walls date back to early Roman and Gothic times, has long been a centre of learning and the arts. The natural beauty of its setting and of its ramparts and buildings have made it ideal for the presentation of outdoor performances since the days of the Renaissance. Since the war the summer festivals have been taking on greater international importance and recently dance and ballet has become one of its most notable features.

TWO interesting festivals are held in Yugoslavia at Dubrovnik and Split. The Dubrovnik one is by far the most important, and this year the main dance programmes were provided by the principal Yugoslav company, that of the Belgrade Opera. Despite certain deficiencies in schooling, this company, the newest contender for international recognition, shows more vigour, attack, vitality and personality in its dancers than any other company, not excepting the Bolshoi, that I have seen in recent years. Apart from its two excellent principals — Trninic and Sifnios — none of its dancers are remarkable. It is the perfect example of a company dominated by brilliant production, a high level of choreography, first-class lighting, and, not least, by two excellent designers, Ristic and Babic-Jovanovic.

BACKGROUND TO YUGOSLAV BALLET

Culture to the Yugoslavs is never something horn-rimmed to be taken seriously and studiously. They love the arts and patronise them — going to the theatre just as we used to go to the cinema. A young factory worker, who insisted on carrying my luggage in Zagreb, could tell me the names of many principal Yugoslav dancers — a prevalent attitude — Miskovitch and Ana Roje being the best-known.

In proportion to its population Yugoslavia possesses, with the probable exception of Spain, a richer heritage of folk dance than any other European country. And although it has so often been subjected to invasions and domination by other powers it has preserved its folk arts — its dances and music being less easily destroyed than the printed manuscript. The dancers are never reticent on stage and they perform their national dances with a strange, compelling vigour. In themselves the dances are remarkable for their extraordinary variety of tempi — some of the rhythms being astonishingly complex — and it is no marvel that they should have provided such a fertile source of inspiration for such distinguished choreographers as Pia and Pino Mlakar.

Classical ballet, on the other hand, is in its comparative infancy, and is very much the child of the Russian Revolution. Since that event Russian dancers and teachers, particularly from Moscow, have tended to dominate the companies in Belgrade and Zagreb, and amongst them have been such well-known personalities as Margarita Froman, Poliakova, Kniassef, Maria Zybina, Kirsanova and Vassiliev.

Nevertheless, Yugoslav ballet has already achieved much, and, as exemplified in the Dubrovnik Festival and various tours, it can be claimed — with few arguments against — that it has contributed something of more originality and significance than Soviet ballet during the past 20 years. Already some beautiful ballets such as *The Devil in the Village, The Gingerbread Heart, Ero the Joker* and *The Okhrid Legend,* which are of far more than local interest and importance, have been created. Unique and refreshing as these delightful works are, they are also a sincere and accurate expression of Yugoslav culture expressed in dance form, and they are performed with great vitality by the dancers, who have expansive personalities.

Today ballet is flourishing in Yugoslavia and there are no less than eight permanent companies. Repertoires tend to overlap: Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet, The Devil in the Village* and *Prince Igor* are danced by most companies.

Already, too, Yugoslavia has been able to export dancers such as Miskovitch, Ana Roje, Mia Slavenska, Sparemblek, Sulich, Oscar Harmos, Veronika Mlakar and Youskevitch, who was first trained in Belgrade. Of the dancers at present in Yugoslavia, Dusanka Sifnios and Dusan Trninic (Belgrade), Jelko Yuresha and Anna Truscott (Split) and Zdravko Baier (Sarajevo) deserve special mention.

FESTIVAL IN DUBROVNIK

No International Festival could have a more appropriate atmosphere than the small medieval fortress town of Dubrovnik. The climate is gentle to architecture. Its palaces, churches, fountains, patios, sculptured balconies, bell-towers and little squares are still intact inside its thick towering walls and look like so many stage décors in themselves. And, more fortunately, Dubrovnik's unique beauty is still undebased by signs of commercialism.

The dance programmes, which were given in a natural setting in one of Dubrovnik's beautiful parks, were provided by the American Ballet Theatre, ensembles of Serbian ("Kolo") and Croatian ("Lado") folk dancers, and by Yugoslavia's principal ballet company, that of the Belgrade Opera.

The Belgrade Ballet, an impressive and unusual company, would be a welcome visitor to London. I enjoyed its performances very much indeed, although I watched some of its rehearsals and classes and was distressed by the poor technical standard. The evidence of over-developed muscles, thick thighs, ugly feet and bad *pointe* work applies to many of the girls. Similar defects are apparent in the boys, many of whom are overweight, but they can be vividly pictured from a visitor's comment: "They can do *tours en l'air* and character *pirouettes* (with *retiré* behind) but they cannot do a *glissade* correctly, and they have a very personal style of *port de bras.*" This is the company's worst feature — with a few exceptions, to be mentioned later, the dancers lack sound technical foundations.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that, paradoxically, the Belgrade Ballet is most impressive in performance. Many of its worst deficiencies have been cleverly camouflaged by Dimitri Parlic, a brilliant producer and an effective choreographer, and by its designers, especially Dusan Ristic, but also counterbalanced by certain solid assets in the dancers — their incredible *joie de vivre* and strong personalities. More than any other company I have ever seen it is the Belgrade Ballet which puts forward the most telling case for the importance of good production, décors and costumes, and imaginative lighting.

Appetites were whetted by the first ballet, which was:

The Devil in the Village

In 1955 the Zagreb Ballet presented Pia and Pino Mlakars' *The Devil in the Village* in London. This version is different in a most unusual respect. Readers will recall that it is a folk-dance ballet, but now, with the exception of its *kolo* finale, it is danced *sur les pointes.* Although there are some sections which do not take this translation well, on the whole the change is remarkably successful, especially in the long opening *pas de deux* idyll between Yela (Dusanka Sifnios) and Mirko (Dusan Trninic).

Milica Babic-Jovanovic's costumes are based on national designs and are very beautiful, while Lhotka's score is a masterpiece of arrangement and orchestration of folk rhythms. The lines of descent from Smetana and Dvorak are obvious, while the influence of Bartók can be detected in the Hell scene. Lhotka has matched the diabolic, rustic and idyllic strains of the plot with appropriate musical themes. As ballet music, it is perfect.

This plot, which would surely have inspired Fokine, is a mixture of good and

evil, and beauty and ugliness, and concerns a Devil who plans to destroy the happiness of two peasant lovers, Mirko and Yela. In an earlier version two hearts, symbolising their love, were seen burning — the Devil appeared and stole one of them. Under the Devil's spell, Mirko amuses himself by flirting with the village girls, and Yela, deeply upset, leaves him after a quarrel. Thus far the Devil has only partly succeeded in his plan of ensnaring Mirko. So, at the Fair, he disguises himself as a stall-holder, and persuades Mirko to buy a magic belt, which puts the wearer completely into his power. The scene changes to Hell and Mirko is introduced to the torments and orgies of the Witches' Sabbath. But he manages to escape by stealing the Devil's cloak, the symbol of his power. Mirko reaches the village in time to save Yela from entering into a marriage, arranged for her by her Mother, with a rich, but idiotically bashful young suitor. He finds his place in Yela's heart once more, and the ballet ends with general rejoicing and everyone dancing the *kolo*.

The choreography is on a very high level. Working within the framework of this simple, but novel, folk-lore subject, Pia and Pino Mlakar have achieved a quite astonishing fusion between their country's complex national dances (the village scenes), modern dance (the Hell scenes) and classical technique (the lovers).

When the action descends to Hell, two clever production devices are used. The Devil's Wife (Katarina Obradovic) violently turns her back to the audience and appears to have changed identity. This effect is achieved by the costume design and a mask fixed on the back of her head. Next, a figure is seen in the shadows — only the face, legs and arms are visible — but these limbs move away from each other, float in the air and reassemble. This is possible because the one figure is composed of three boys.

The ballet is dominated by Dusanka Sifnios, who conveys the simple peasant charm and modesty with freshness and great sincerity. The work was not helped by Stevan Zunac's interpretation of the Devil: he made the character rather small and silly and his performance was not helped by his wretched technique. Magdalena Janeva as the Doll revealed a vivacious personality and a clean technique, while Trninic and Katarina Obradovic each gave competent performances, but little more.

Beautiful as the costumes are, a number are spoilt by shoddy fabrics — the boys' tights and the shoes were particularly bad.

The most ambitious production in the repertoire is:

Romeo and Juliet

Parlic's version of this Prokofiev ballet can stand beside the Bolshoi and Ashton versions without apology. He has accomplished what other choreographers have failed to suggest. Seeing the setting through southern spectacles, he has been able to give the work its appropriate Italian atmosphere. His Italian dances — in tarantella style — are excellent. On the other hand, Parlic has attempted to interpret the entire ballet in dance (eliminating mime) and on visual lines as against emotional development. Through his very cursory treatment of the plot, one is tempted to pose the question: "How carefully has Parlic studied his source?" While an English choreographer would almost certainly be restrained by reasons of sentiment, scholarship or reverence from tampering overmuch with the plot, Parlic has selected only those passages of action which translate best into dance form and develop the theme. But if the work is some distance from Shakespeare, it is none the less dramatic or visually spectacular for that.

Parlic is an excellent producer and he has a wonderful eye for scenic effects, a flair for crowd movements (impromptu or disciplined), group scenes, tableaux and, especially, court dances, which are simple but full of invention. The ballet is visually exciting and a triumph of production. Much of its success can also be attributed to Dusan Ristic's stylish and colourful costumes and masks, and to the speed of the action. An attractive composite set (designed on different levels) is used imaginatively: thus endless scene changes and musical interludes are eliminated.

One cannot complain that the mime is bad for, in fact, it hardly exists. The Capulets, the Prince of Verona and Paris have been virtually dispensed with, and the brief Friar Lawrence scenes (a character of the flimsiest pasteboard) were an embarrassment. I think that the most disagreeable feature is the casting of a young girl as Juliet's Nurse and the fact that she has been given a lively *variation*.

Parlic seems unable to give any suggestion of real characterisation in his choreography, which is slick and effective but never distinguished by profundity of feeling. This applies not only to his conception of the rôle of the Nurse, but also to his treatment of the star-crossed lovers. Some of the choreography is very beautiful and original and particularly striking in some of the *pas de deux*, but even the passionately beautiful dancing of Trninic (as Romeo), and to a lesser extent of Sifnios, cannot disguise the fact that the choreography is at its weakest in developing the emotional base of the plot and thus defining with subtlety its beautiful theme of "progress and tragedy in love".

So animated was Sifnios in the opening scenes that one wondered whether she, too, had ever studied the play. With rustling petticoats and vivacious smiles, she suggested rather a Massine Glove-Seller or First-Hand than innocent fourteen.

Mercutio's death is becoming a *tour de force* — the male answer to Giselle's Mad

THE DEVIL IN THE VILLAGE: *Dusanka Sifnios, as Yela, and Dusan Trninic, as Mirko, in a* pas de deux *from Pia and Pino Mlakar's ballet.*

ROMEO AND JULIET: *Sifnios, as Juliet, and Trninic, as Romeo, in a* pas de deux *from Parlic's version of the Prokofiev ballet.*

DESIGNS BY RISTIC: Left, the design for the permanent setting of Parlic's Romeo and Juliet. *Right, the front-cloth for Parlic's* La Reine des Iles.

Scene — and Marjan Jugusht as Mercutio gave a moving interpretation, but an interpretation which would be improved if he would point his feet occasionally and tidy up his technique. Nevertheless, he was infinitely superior to the Benvolio, who did not seem to be able to dance at all. Branko Markovic was a neurotic Tybalt and instilled more life than is usual into this character.

Dimitri Parlic uses lifts very rarely in his choreography, but he seems greatly addicted to movements on the floor — kneeling poses, and so on. But, to my taste, he seems a little too attached to *tours en l'air*. The closing scenes are effective although, as in other versions, the ballet tends to run down as the characters are dispensed with. An interesting touch is provided by the choreographer, who revives Juliet just before Romeo's death, giving her an unusual *pas de deux* with a Romeo whose strength is ebbing.

But the ballet is dominated by Dusan Trninic, who makes a truly romantic and elegant Romeo. Although he lacks the technical brilliance of Kronstam and the strength of Zhdanov, he is more moving. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that Parlic has given no ingenious psychological penetration to the rôle in his choreography. Trninic has an expressive body and he is a graceful dancer: he does suggest with great individuality and sensitivity the boyish passions of Romeo.

An even greater triumph of production was witnessed in Parlic's version of de Falla's:

El Amor Brujo

It was quite obvious that the dancers had never seen a Spanish company, and even Parlic did not seem to have a very sure grasp of the style. Never did his trite choreography suggest that he had immersed himself in Spanish dance as Massine did for *Le Tricorne* — the suggestion implied was that Parlic was an habitué of the cabaret! Despite its extraordinary "exotic" style, and the shoes, with enormous orthopaedic heels, which nearly crippled the dancers, the ballet has a remarkable impact.

Once again this was due to production but, especially, to brilliant lighting and Ristic's costumes and décor. This suggested not only the beauty of Spain, but also the passion, savagery and mystery of that country.

Mira Sanjina is bizarrely considered to be the best "Spanish" dancer in Yugoslavia. This may be so — but her body is stiff, and her movements contorted and ill-defined. Nevertheless, she has a striking appearance and really gets across by sheer personality and her skill in suggesting a Candelas tortured and tormented by the passions of an earlier love. Dusan Trninic, handsome and as pencil slim as a Spanish dancer should be, was equally impressive. He alone

BALLETS IN PERFORMANCE: Left, Mercutio's death from Parlic's Romeo and Juliet *with Marjan Jagust and Dusan Trninic in the centre. Right, a scene from Parlic's charming light ballet,* La Reine des Iles.

suggested a true understanding of Spanish dance.

Prince Igor

This version was rich in detail and nicely authentic in its choreography. Babic-Jovanovic's costumes and set are the best I have seen and Katarina Obradovic gave an excellent performance as the Polovtsian Girl. But, with this one exception, everything was perfect except the dancers. The Persian Slave looked beautiful, but her dancing was inadequate and her pink *pointes* and pink tights looked curiously out of place in the Tartar setting. The ballet's worst feature was the Polovtsian Chief, who could neither turn or jump, and who kept getting submerged by the ensembles. This was the only ballet staged in Dubrovnik in which production and décor did not disguise the shortcomings of the dancers.

La Reine des Iles

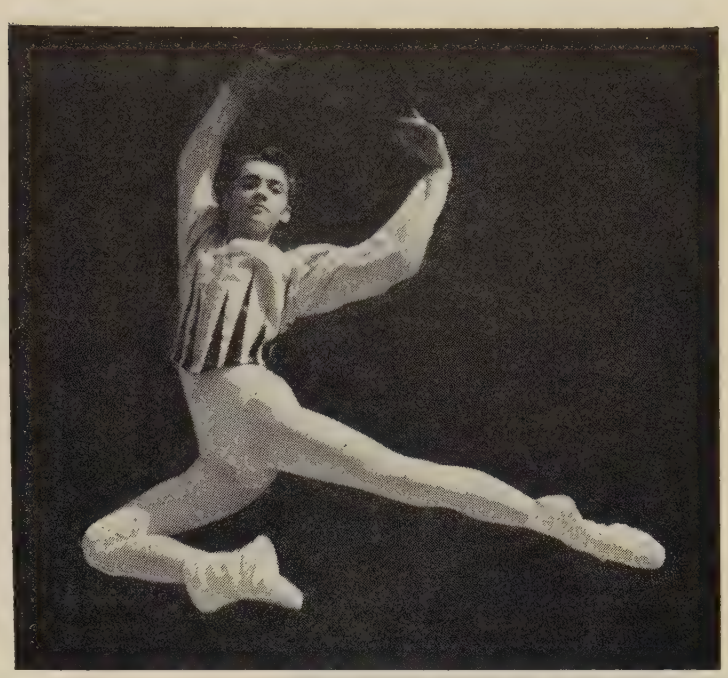
In style this sophisticated work could be termed a chic French sequel to *Pineapple Poll.* Its music by Thiriet is a bubbling mixture of waltzes, hornpipes and marches plus very much what one can imagine Offenbach would have composed if he had visited the Caribbean or discovered the Mambo; Parlic's choreography is light and appropriate; and Ristic's designs, which are quite worthy of the smartest French companies, suggest the agreeable influences of Dufy and Derain. But the plot, too, is clever and amusing.

It concerns the French annexation of the island of San Domingo. Pauline Bonaparte, who has become "the Queen of the Isles", and her expatriate court tire of their fashionable dances. Although the Natives are hostile and anxious to expel the French from the island, Pauline and her ladies agree to disguise themselves in mulatto costumes so as to visit the native dances.

They join the natives and teach them the Chaconne, but they are unmasked and threatened with danger. In the meantime an Admiral commanding the French fleet has arrived with the news that by order of Napoleon Pauline is to return to Paris. But Pauline is nowhere to be found. She escapes from the natives, however, and returns to her court disguised as a Witch Doctor. She obeys her brother's call and all take the boat for France. Only the native servants remain and they express their joy at having regained liberty.

Excellent performances were given by Ljiljana Dulovic, a most promising dancer, as Pauline Bonaparte, and by Branko Marcovic as Payano the Native Chief. The ballet is frothy. amusing and trivial, and often reminiscent of Massine at his gayest. Ristic's sets and Thiriet's score give it distinction. Light comedy ballets are rare and this is one which would appeal to London audiences.

Of the dancers in the Belgrade Ballet, Dusan Trninic is the most impressive; he has a very unusual and pleasing personal style. Having studied in Paris, the results of French schooling are obvious and his *port de bras* is "very French". He has a certain glamour on stage, a natural elegance, and a distinguished appearance. He has excellent legs, his back is supple and pliant, and he always takes quite naturally beautiful positions. Except for his *batterie*, his technique is good but in no way remarkable. Trninic's special quality is softness — a "Babilée plus". He has a peculiar habit of seldom holding an *arabesque* vertically — he holds it for a fraction of a second and then slowly falls out of it. This may, of course, be due to a defect of balance, but I find it quite attractive. Altogether, he is a most artistic and original artist.



DANCER FROM SPLIT: Jelko Yurésha, a very gifted young Yugoslav dancer who is a pupil of Ana Roje and one of the principal dancers in Oscar Harmos's company in Split. He has a phenomenal elevation.

Photo: Vucemilovic

Dusanka Sifnios, the company's ballerina, has been partly trained in England, and her style is as English as Trninic's is French. She is dangerously pretty, being blonde and Scandinavian in appearance, and she has a delicious pout. Her technique is clean and crisp, and she has high extensions which, unfortunately, she is not always able to hold. Her turns are erratic and her *chainés* below standard. While Trninic rarely moves a muscle in his face, he somehow conveys a great deal with his body. Sifnios uses her face a great deal, but carelessly, and conveys far less.

These two principal dancers, I must add, do not seem to be in particularly great harmony with each other. Not only does there appear to be a clash of styles, but also of temperaments. Their curtain calls would be worthy of Tudor's *Gala Performance*!

Dubrovnik's unique setting helps to make it one of the most exciting of major festivals. The Yugoslav people are charming and hospitable, attractive and unaffected, cultured and independent: they show a rare combination of humour, tenderness and tough understanding, without being either cynical or dull. No one could wish for better company at a gathering of the arts.

THE SPLIT FESTIVAL

To any English visitor it must seem incredible that a city such as Split with only 72,000 inhabitants can maintain a permanent opera company of 60 singers and a ballet company of 30 dancers. Yet, this is a fact, and, what is more, Split is only one of the eight permanent Yugoslav ballet companies. The Adriatic climate, lush vegetation and starry nights, make outdoor performances ideal. Thus the façade and steps of the impressive Mestrovíc memorial made a wonderful stage for an elaborate production of *Turandot,* and the peristyle of Diocletian's palace an effective setting for *Aida.*

Split's principal theatre is charming, being designed as a miniature replica of La Scala, and its ballet company is of a reasonable standard. Oscar Harmos is both principal choreographer and ballet master, and he is working intelligently along the right lines, although it is hard to say whether he is handicapped or positively helped by the dancers, who show a strong note of implacable individuality, but insufficient respect for precision and neatness in ensembles.

Harmos himself has been predominantly trained as a classical dancer, but he has danced with the Ballets Jooss. He has made good use of this mixed background, and has achieved a fairly satisfactory balance between the freer movements of modern dance and the tighter, more disciplined style of neo-classicism in which he has been influenced by Massine's symphonic works. Two of his ballets — *Symphonie Fantastique* and Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony (Les Présages)* — were, of course, originally created by Massine. Harmos is an original choreographer, though, who likes to match his music with a definite theme, and it is true to say that he has not copied the originals.

In *Symphonie Fantastique,* for example, one detects many differences — the Musician takes the narcotic at the end of the first scene (not at the beginning), there are fewer Muses and no Deer or Children in the pastoral scene, and so on. His ballet *Stranác (The Stranger)* is an even more satisfactory work. Here Harmos has used a Dalmatian folk legend with good effect and he has been supplied with an atmospheric score by Bombardelli.

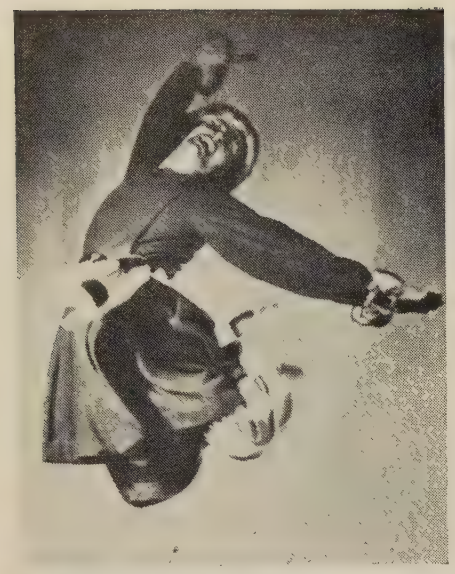
The most striking feature of the Split company is that it possesses two pure-in-style classical dancers. Jelko Yurésha, who is only 19, is already a *danseur noble,* with a dignified style, a breathtakingly beautiful line, and phenomenal elevation. Anna Truscott is a young English-born dancer with a captivating appearance and a very strong technique. Both of these young dancers are genuinely gifted regarding technique, but need to bring their personalities into sharper focus to become really impressive and *persona grata* for any of the leading international companies. Moreover, if it were not for the fact that both are pupils of Ana Roje, finding two such genuine classical dancers in such strange surroundings would seem indeed miraculous.

The majority of the dancers have mediocre techniques and are much more suited to *demi-caractère* dancing. However, three principals gave effective performances: Nives Zelíc, Anci Kaliterna and Miles Marsden.

Ballet Perspectives: 7

Prince Igor (Part 2)

by CLIVE BARNES



POLOVTSIAN WARRIORS IN BRITAIN (left): Top, Harold Turner in Sergueeff's production for International Ballet. Middle, Poul Gnatt in Beriosoff's first British version of Fokine's choreography for Metropolitan Ballet and, bottom, Wolfgang Brunner in Beriosoff's later revival for Festival Ballet.

In the first part of Clive Barnes' article on Prince Igor, **published last month, the Fokine production for Diaghilev was considered. The actress, Ellen Terry, writing about the work in her book,** The Russian Ballet, **when it was first given at Covent Garden described it as "wonderful".**

It is easy to see why the epithet "Wonderful!" sprang to Ellen Terry's lips, for even Fokine, that master of scenic hysteria, rarely produced anything more stirring. In his invaluable book on Fokine, written with the co-operation of the choreographer, Beaumont tells us that; "the steps and movements used in this dance were suggested to Fokine partly from what he had read of the Asiatic tribes which invaded Russia, and still more by Borodin's music; for at that time he had not studied Caucasian, Persian, and Turkish dances, as he did later." In this connection, it is worth observing that while the dances for the Polovtsian are given with a remarkable clarity of expression and vigour of invention, those for the Oriental Slaves seem anaemic by comparison, representing hardly any choreographic advance from the typical Imperial Russian ballet's "orientalism" to be seen in *The Nutcracker.*

But despite this minor blemish Fokine in *Prince Igor* demonstrates his complete mastery of choreography. The wonderfully inventive ground patterns, with their converging parallel lines and whirling circles, the bounding stamping dances full of both fire and weight, and the vividly evoked atmosphere and characterisation make a good performance of the ballet—a rare thing today—an overwhelming experience. There is no story except for the thinly sketched impression of a nomadic camp awakening, coming to life and then spurred on by their savage chief, producing a frenzied series of war dances that are sinister, menacing and yet ecstatically abandoned. The best parts of the ballet, such as the spinning, grinning fury of the Polovtsian girls or the ferocious, leaping sorties of the Polovtsian Chief, have a quality of pure animalism, fascinating in its naked intensity.

Fokine produced *Prince Igor* for many companies, perhaps the most notable revival being that produced for the Royal Danish Ballet. The first performance was on October 14, 1925, and the décor and costumes were by Konstanin Korovin. The rôle of the Chief Polovtsian Warrior was taken by Harald Lander. The ballet is still in the Danish repertory, and the production is possibly the most authentic and the most exciting currently to be seen; unfortunately the Danes have yet to bring it to England. Later Fokine revived the ballet as far afield as Latvia and the Argentine, and, of course, as already noted the work formed a familiar part of virtually every one of the pre-war and wartime Ballet Russe companies.

The first performance of the ballet in London after the war was given at the Cambridge Theatre on July 17, 1946, by Serge Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo. Set against a dull blue cyclorama, with nothing but a few vestiges of scenery to be seen, and performed in costumes the dominating colour of which seemed to be coffee and cream, the ballet was surprisingly successful, chiefly through the exceptional performance of Alexandre Kalioujny in the leading rôle, a part later also taken with success by Vladimir Skouratoff. The only other foreign company to produce *Prince Igor* since the war has been Col. de Basil's Original Ballet Russe, with Vladimir Dokoudovski as the Chief Warrior.

Unlike some of the other Fokine standard works *Prince Igor* has never established itself as one of the cornerstones of the English ballet repertory. In the first instance this was probably due to the shortage of male dancers, but now there is no doubt that its inclusion in the repertory of the Royal Ballet, in a production by the Grigorievs, is long overdue. The first British production was probably in October, 1939, by John Regan's company Les Ballets Trois Arts, and this company in its various manifestations kept it fairly continually in its repertory until its final disbandment in 1949, but the revival, although spirited, was not particularly authentic and was in no way distinguished. Credit for the first notable British production belongs to the enterprising, yet short-lived, Metropolitan Ballet, directed by Cecilia Blatch. The revival was supervised by Nicholas Beriosoff, and had its first performance at the New Theatre, Northampton, on April 15, 1948. The Chief Polovtsian Warrior was danced by Poul Gnatt, and the décor and costumes were by Peter Williams, who devised a fine non-realistic backcloth consisting of a white "lightning-flash" with a blue surround decorated at the borders with a spear *motif.* Subsequently the leading rôle was danced by Frank Staff, Beriosoff, Michel de Lutry and Kalioujny.

Nicholas Beriosoff was also responsible for the next British production which was by London's Festival Ballet at the Stoll Theatre on June 19, 1951. The Roehrich décor and costumes were used, and the leading rôles were danced by Vassili Trunoff (Chief Warrior), Natalie Krassovska (Princess), and Paula Hinton (Polovtsian Girl). In later performances the rôle of the Chief Warrior has also been taken by Witaly Osins, Russell Kerr, Jeffrey Kovel, and—dancing in a version which he quite possibly choreographed himself, or even made up as he went along—Istvan Rabovsky.

Of all the dancers who have appeared as the Chief Warrior, one has only to look at a photograph of Adolph Bolm in the rôle, with his great bull neck and fanatical eyes, to realise his greatness. But the rôle was taken with success by most of the distinguished pre-war Russian character dan-

EARLY BRITISH VERSION OF FOKINE: Nicholas Beriosoff re-created Fokine's version of Prince Igor *for Metropolitan Ballet shortly after the war and it was designed by Peter Williams. Poul Gnatt as the Chief Polovtsian Warrior is seen in the centre.*

cers including notably Léon Woizikowsky.

Post-war performances have possibly been most notable for Alexandre Kalioujny and Vassilie Trunoff. Kalioujny's virility shone out in the Monte Carlo production, itself more remarkable for its abandon than style. Trunoff's splendid realisation of the rôle—which matured considerably with time—was framed by Beriosoff's careful revival for Festival Ballet. For the same company both Russell Kerr and Jeffrey Kovel produced notable performances, as did Poul Gnatt for Metropolitan Ballet, and later, George Kirsta's Original Ballet Russe. The Hungarian dancer Istvan Rabovsky, who danced the part with Festival Ballet in 1954, revealed a sensational, if somewhat showy, technique, but made so many amendments to Fokine's ballet that he might well have been appearing in a different work.

The languorous captive Princess is a fairly easy part, and most of its post-war interpreters have been perfectly adequate, although perhaps the beauty of Helène Komarova (Kramer) for De Basil's Original Ballet Russe, and Natalie Krassovska and Daphne Dale for Festival Ballet should be particularly mentioned. Sonia Arova made a splendid Polovtsian Girl, and in the same part Paula Hinton succeeded in giving what was quite possibly the finest performance of a female character rôle seen in British ballet since the war.

AGON—decor

Continued from page 11

music, though further acquaintance with music and design reveal a definite form in both.

The setting has perspective, architectural suggestion and something of the mystery of a Paul Klee. The calligraphic lines on the wings lead to an anonymous dwelling — could be palace, could me more lowly — surmounted by primitive figures. Are they ancient deities passing judgment on human achievement and behaviour, or fates controlling human destiny, or are they just watchers — eternal *voyeuses* prying on our private lives and passing silent censure? I don't know, but these figures are omnipresent throughout the ballet even to their form being repeated in the chairs scattered around the stage, and these stylised human shapes, more than anything, give the work its mystery — its feeling that some other force is animating the dancers.

For colour, Georgiadis has left the north European dinginess of his recent *The Burrow* and returned to his native Mediterranean. The texture and warmth of his setting suggests Etruria. Orange, ranging from the damp and weathered to sun-baked and near-white, dominates the stage, and it gives the setting a timelessness which can belong to today or to everybody's yesterdays. On the face of it this setting seems busy, yet so perfect is its composition that its business never detracts from the costumes or the choreography. In fact, an integration of costumes and décor. which I noted as such a progress in what Georgiadis did for *The Burrow*, has been carried a step further forward here.

Another development in Georgiadis' work is the limitation of his palette. There was a time when he was in serious danger of becoming a colour-clutterist — his stage was apt to pile on colour so that it became a bit indigestible. This toning-down first became apparent also in *The Burrow* and in his designs for the play, *Lysistrata*. In *Agon* there is even greater economy and it is far more effective theatrically.

With two exceptions, the orange, black and white of the décor has been carried through in the costumes. The apex of colour — bright orange — being in the costumes for the two principals (Linden and Blair); the rest are divided broken black and grey for the girls' *corps de ballet*, with variations in shape and colour for the headdresses, while white with splashes of yellow, orange and black predominates in the boys' costumes. The two exceptions mentioned are for the two introductory figures of Deidre Dixon and Ronald Hynd. Dressed in turquoise they make a complete contrast which helps to point the fanfare-heralded phases into which Stravinsky has divided his score. All through the costumes there are interesting and new shapes, at one point the bounce of the girls' short-in-front-long-behind tutus is incorporated in the choreography — all of which gives the dancers a new elegance and real chic. I particularly liked the way in which the shapes of the heads were revealed and the hair-line eliminated. In fact the only fault I could find was in the slight hardness caused by the box-like butcher-boy caps worn by the male dancers.

The lighting plot was simple and, with two exceptions, diffused the stage with a mildly warm glow. This was probably right because lighting should react to music and Stravinsky's score never reaches an overwhelming crescendo. On the other hand a little brighter light on some of the principal dancers, from time to time, would have been a help. The two noticeable light changes give an added sense of drama and a new dimension to the setting. In the *pas de deux* for the two boys, leading into Maryon Lane's variation, the lighting from the front is taken down and light on the backcloth and behind the wings is brought up; this results in a number of new shapes and silhouettes being revealed. For the *pas de deux* with Linden and Blair, these shapes are even more pronounced and the two dance in a spotlight in what seems a different world symbolising their emotions.

This is ballet designing on a level of which Diaghilev would have approved, and, like so many of the designs for Diaghilev's ballets, its importance is unlikely to be recognised immediately by the average person.

Peter Williams.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

Running time

23 minutes, 30 seconds.

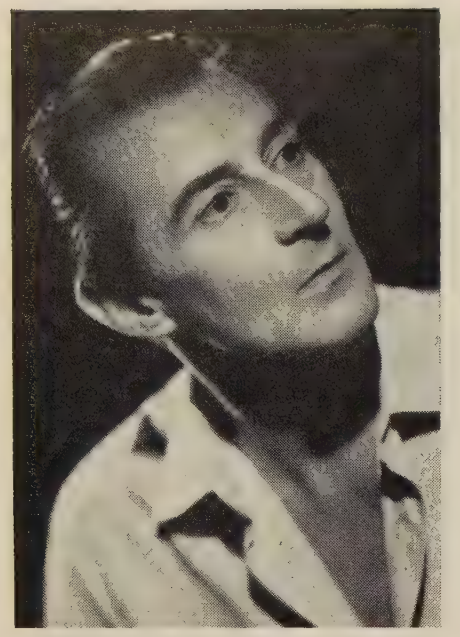
Audience reaction

13 curtain calls on first night, including 3 house lights up: mildly enthusiastic applause, with a few solitary cheers.

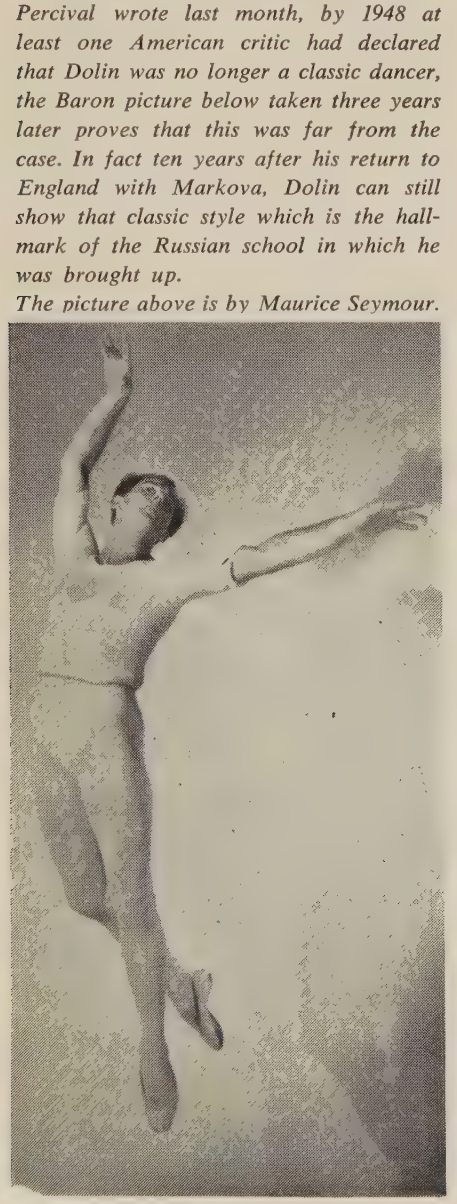
Press reaction

(6 stars—Rave; 5 stars—enthusiastic; 4 stars—favourable; 3 stars—lukewarm; 2 stars—unfavourable; 1 star—pan.)

Daily Express **** *Daily Mail* *; *Daily Telegraph* ***; *Financial Times* *****; *Manchester Guardian* **; *News Chronicle* ******; *Observer* *; *Sunday Times* **.



POST-WAR DOLIN: Although, as John Percival wrote last month, by 1948 at least one American critic had declared that Dolin was no longer a classic dancer, the Baron picture below taken three years later proves that this was far from the case. In fact ten years after his return to England with Markova, Dolin can still show that classic style which is the hallmark of the Russian school in which he was brought up.
The picture above is by Maurice Seymour.



ACCENT ON THE MALE: 6 (part 2) Anton Dolin

First Star becomes Director

by JOHN PERCIVAL

I SUGGESTED last month that two opposite influences can be seen at work in Dolin's dancing and that from the interaction of these spring both his best qualities and his faults. On the one hand is the classical tradition to which he was first exposed in the class of Serafina Astafieva and on the stage of the Alhambra Theatre, London, when he danced in Diaghilev's production of *The Sleeping Princess.* This was a tradition essentially refined, reserved, aristocratic, making no concessions to popular taste. On the other hand there is the extravagant showmanship which enabled him to succeed equally in revues and music-halls, the "common touch" revealed in his passionate desire to bring ballet to the ordinary man and woman.

"I cannot understand why it should be considered vulgar to dance a classical *pas de deux* in revue," wrote Dolin, "when the same dance performed on the stage of a world-famous opera house would be regarded as the perfection of balletic art." Indeed so, but in addition to classical *pas de deux* Dolin has danced, both in revues and on opera-house stages, works of very little intrinsic merit, works which derive their effect entirely from the fire of his personality, the brilliance of his skill as a showman.

The supreme example of these works is his *Bolero.* There are plenty of people ready to dismiss this as a music-hall turn, and I would not pretend to find any choreographic interest in its structure or patterns. As a display of dancing, however, it has its legitimate place: a party piece to be given on special occasions. The superb arrogance with which Dolin dances it is unmatched; and what suspense he achieves by monotonous repetition, slowly building up to the short climax. I have certainly enjoyed it and am not ashamed to say so.

Nevertheless, I do not think it is merely highbrow snobbery to suggest that this is far removed from "the perfection of balletic art". It is designed to make a direct, immediate appeal to the common man. When Dolin is at his best he can reconcile the two sides of his own nature and bring the same direct and immediate appeal to the aristocratic style of the classical ballet. When he is not at his best, he substitutes for the pure classical style a showy *panache,* a heavy emphasis and insistence on big, brusque gestures. But one cannot condemn him for this without remembering that it arises only from a temporary lack of balance between those elements which, properly blended, have made him one of the greatest dancers of his generation.

Dolin could be seen at his best in three of the six rôles which he danced at Covent Garden ten years ago when he first returned to Britain after the war. As Satan in *Job* he was magnificently evil. The staccato movements which de Valois had created for him nearly twenty years before suited him still, and he danced with a powerfully athletic quality. More important, he restored to the part the immense pride which is the motivation of the character's actions, and showed the remnants of glory which still, in their perverted form, shine balefully through the darkness of the fallen angel.

To the rôle of Albrecht in *Giselle,* too, he brought qualities which had long been missing. Other dancers had all too often hidden Albrecht's noble birth completely beneath the peasant disguise he assumes in Act 1. Dolin played the early scenes with an appropriate quiet dignity which gave way to overpowering remorse after Giselle's death and a frantic desperation when trapped by the Wilis in Act 2.

To my mind, however, his finest achievement that season was in a part he had never before played in its entirety, that of Prince Florimund in *The Sleeping Beauty.* This called for no strong dramatic interpretation, but he gave the rôle new authority without any exaggeration or eccentricities. He is the only British dancer ever to have played this part who has seen it performed by dancers trained in the Maryinsky Theatre where it was created. In consequence, his sense of style was complete and entirely convincing. He danced the *grand pas de deux* with a serene elegance which was a constant delight to watch. The way in which, at one point, he turned to look back at his partner was a small thing, but typical of his artistry.

His partner was, of course, Alicia Markova. They had danced together as students; they had danced together in Diaghilev's company; and they had danced together frequently ever since. Each had appeared also with many other partners, but they knew each other's work thoroughly and were in complete sympathy all the time they were on stage. Dolin manifestly enjoyed working with her, and together they achieved a degree of perfection in the classical *pas de deux* which has been equalled by few other modern partnerships and excelled by none.

In his book on the art of partnering, Dolin wrote that "the good cavalier is born, not made. He is someone who has naturally the instinct, the requisite strength and feeling and, above all, a sincere love of his work." If these words contain a hint of pride at his own achievements, this is wholly justified. Certainly the sincere love of his work was always clearly apparent in his partnering of Markova. The tenderness with which he supported her while she glided, so smoothly and quietly, into *pirouettes;* the ardour with which he lifted her; the courtesy with which he escorted her round the stage — these were unmistakable.

After their season with the Royal Ballet, it seemed that Markova and Dolin were going to devote themselves to well-paid occasional appearances without any kind of permanent setting. They gave some guest performances in America, they made a tour of South Africa and they appeared in two vast London arenas: first at the Empress Hall, with a scratch *corps de ballet,* and then with Ballet Rambert at Harringay Arena. In 1949, however, they embarked on a tour of the English provinces with a small supporting group which soon proved to be the nucleus of a new company, Festival Ballet. Dolin's association with this com-

pany, as dancer and as artistic director, has proved to be the longest of any in his whole career.

Dolin's ambition for Festival Ballet was the same as for the earlier Markova-Dolin Ballet. In his own words, "we aimed at building up a new ballet tradition in an all-British company possessing a style and individuality of its own . . . to appeal more widely to the British public . . . we avoided anything eccentric, obscure or ultra-modern, concentrating mainly on the romantic and poetic type of ballet with a good story, easy to follow and like".

This aim, in which I think Dolin has succeeded, was at once audaciously bold and at the same time dangerously limited. It was courageous to appeal, not to the special ballet audience but to the general theatre-going public. My impression is that a good many people go to the Festival Hall each summer who rarely, if ever, see any other ballet company, and equally that many of the regular ballet audience display only a very limited interest in these seasons. This state of affairs is the result, I believe, both of the nature of the repertory and of the way it is danced.

There is nothing at all wrong in a ballet being "easy to follow and like". On the other hand, most of the greatest ballets are easy to follow only in the sense that they seize the spectator's imagination, deeply involve his interest and compel his close and sympathetic attention throughout their action. It seems to me not only that Festival Ballet has not yet produced a work of this nature but that its policy makes it unlikely to do so in future, because such works are less likely to appeal to a casual audience. Significantly, very few of the company's creations have remained in the repertory for more than a few seasons at most.

Also, the revivals which consequently have to bear the weight of the repertory are usually danced by Festival Ballet with a high-spirited enthusiasm which delights its own audience but is achieved only at the expense of other qualities.

In other words, Festival Ballet corresponds to only one side of Dolin's artistic nature — the exuberant but meretricious showmanship of the man who wants to be as widely popular as possible. Of the other aspect of Dolin's personality, the careful and meticulous artist in the classical style, there is too little in the company's work, and it is missed most of all in the frequent performances of ballets like *Swan Lake, Giselle* and *Les Sylphides,* which must inevitably be compared with the standards Dolin himself has set in the past.

WITH TWO DIAGHILEV BALLERINAS: Left, with Markova in the Nutcracker pas de deux. *Right, with Danilova in a character rôle in* Mam'zelle Fifi.

There have been few examples of Dolin's own choreography in the repertory of Festival Ballet. What we have seen has been generally simple and unpretentious, pleasant to look at when well danced, all in perfect taste but not particularly memorable.

Inevitably, Dolin has danced far less in recent years, and he has given up most of his classical parts. To various supporting rôles, however, he still brings considerable presence and sometimes great distinction. His Moor in *Petrushka* lacks something of the supple and sinewy athleticism of younger dancers in the part, but reveals far more of the frighteningly inhuman and aggressive quality of the character than anyone else has shown lately.

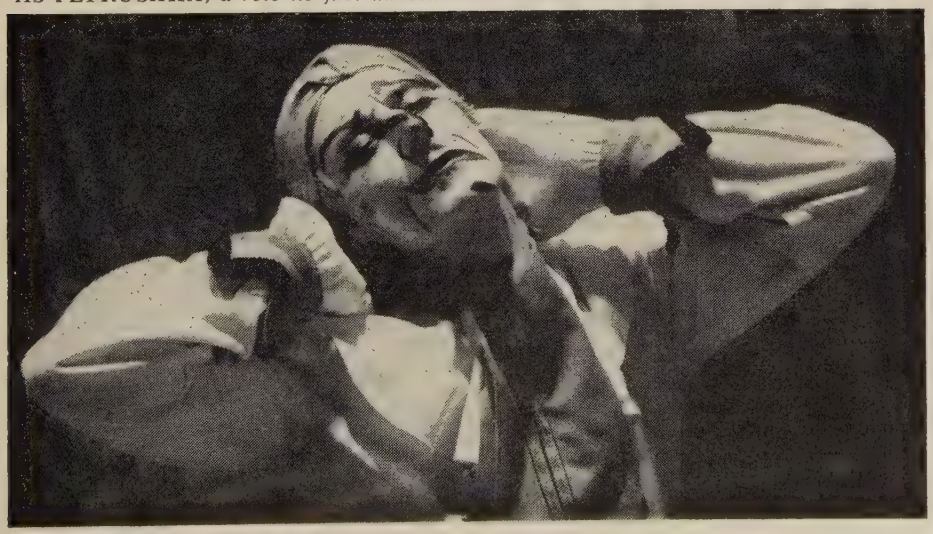
Equally notable was his performance as Dr. Drosselmeyer in the recent production of *The Nutcracker.* His entrance was impressive, his presence always dominating, and he succeeded in suggesting an essential kindliness hidden behind the strange aspect and eccentric ways of the old man. The character is not conceived on naturalistic lines, but if it is to be credible and sympathetic, it must remind us of those old people who love children but cannot help terrifying them.

Drosselmeyer also gave some slight scope for Dolin to exercise his gift for wit and humour. A few seasons earlier, in the rather feeble rôle of Baron Popoff in *Vilia,* Dolin was funny enough to give an idea of just how riotous he could be in a really first-rate comedy part, but on the whole this side of Dolin the dancer has been curiously neglected by Dolin the artistic director.

Other parts over the years have shown other aspects of his talent. I recall, for example, the earnest sincerity with which he acted St. George in the children's Christmas play, *Where the Rainbow Ends.* I remember, too, the immense dignity with which he escorted Markova round the stage in Lichine's *Impressions,* and how solicitously he supported her while she executed almost interminable *rondes de jambe* in nearly every imaginable position.

It is not for rôles like these, however, that he will be remembered in years to come. The future history of British ballet will record the acrobatic brilliance of his youthful triumphs and the many fine classical performances of his maturity. It will relate how he helped, by his success, to prepare the way for other men in this country to make a career in ballet and also how, by precept and example, he handed on to the best of the next generation of dancers his own skill, attentiveness and unfailing good manners as a partner. Errors of judgment and lapses of taste, if not forgotten, will fall into an insignificant place, and he will be honoured as one of the founders of British ballet.

AS PETRUSHKA, a rôle he first danced with Festival Ballet.



COPENHAGEN RETURN: Well-known Danish dancer, Birgir Bartholin (one from left), has returned home to open a school. He is seen in his studio with Toni Lander, Elsa Marianne Von Rosen and Flemming Flindt. We are happy to say that the latter is making a splendid recovery from his recent knee injury.

BRAINS TRUST: Doreen Wells, Anton Dolin, Anya Linden, John Gilpin, Natalie Krassovska and David Blair in the Brains Trust which was the closing ceremony of the highly successful exhibition, organised by George Hall, at the Army & Navy Stores. During the month the exhibition was open over 10,000 people saw it.

curtain up!

But it pours

HOW strange are the ways of impresarios and those who arrange ballet seasons. For nearly two years, London has been almost starved of ballet apart from the seasons of the resident companies, then suddenly there is a glut. In the second week of September it was possible to see Fonteyn, Markova, Massine and a Ballet Rambert *Giselle* all on one evening. During one week the Royal Ballet, Ballet Rambert, Festival Ballet and the de Cuevas International Ballet were all playing at the same time. The most ironic point of all, since we see so little French ballet nowadays, is that France's two great ballerinas — Yvette Chauviré and Nina Vyroubova — should be in London at the same time competing in different theatres.

Although gluts of this kind are often followed by bleak famines, the autumn looks as though it will be an unusually busy one. October sees the return of Antonio and his Spanish Ballet, this time to the London Coliseum. Ballet Premières from the Edinburgh Festival will appear for two weeks at Sadler's Wells Theatre and then, at the end of the month, the Royal Ballet returns to Covent Garden with a new three-act work — Frederick Ashton's *Undine*. It seems as though London is doing its best to make up for lost time.

New help for ballet

IF your are a company which does not enjoy any State aid, then the chances of you being able to put on important new ballets are hazardous to say the least. It has always meant that the Artistic Director has to keep a weather-eye more on popular demands rather than on real artistic integrity. I hear that in the near future, all this may be changed as steps are being taken to form a Ballet Trust as a limited company. This is being formed to provide a medium through which industrial and business concerns may contribute towards the development of creative works. The Trust will not be used to pay administrative expenses but to commission scores, choreographers and designers for new works and to provide funds for their production.

At the moment this interesting new venture is in an advanced stage and I hope to be able to tell more about it next month.

His only ballet

THE death, mourned by everyone, of that great British composer Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, has made irretrievable the strange neglect of his talent by British ballet in recent years. Opinions of his only ballet, *Job*, vary widely, but the music itself is universally respected and did much to establish the reputation of our national ballet in its nursery days. It still remains one of the finest scores ever written for a British ballet. At the time of its writing, Vaughan Williams obviously had some doubts about the respectability of ballet and insisted on calling *Job* a "Masque for Dancing". Lately, however, he had written music for several films, and I refuse to believe that he could not have been persuaded to compose another ballet. He remains, like the painter Rouault who recently died, a person who only made one contribution to the art of ballet but who will always be honoured as long as ballet exists.

The flame of fame

DO you carry a torch for the Bolshoi Ballet? It is possible for you to do so literally now for among the many souvenirs of the company which I found at the Brussels Exhibition were—boxes of matches. Each box has a label with a photograph showing one or more of the leading dancers. The matches were made and packed in Russia specially for the occasion and are likely to be eagerly sought by those who collect such things. The inflammable part, appropriately enough, is red.

When I see matchboxes on sale showing pictures of the Royal Ballet, then I shall know that British ballet is really established at last.

Sylphide confusion

RICHARD BUCKLE, the former editor of *Ballet* and organiser of the Diaghilev Exhibition, is one of the unpredictables of the contemporary scene. His latest activity has been to edit the journals of his great-great-grandmother and her sister. One reviewer of the book seized upon the point that neither sister was interested in art or politics. "Georgina," he wrote, "was too busy flirting to watch Maria Taglioni's interpretation of *Les Sylphides*."

To see the great nineteenth-century ballerina dance this classic of the twentieth century would indeed have been an achievement which would have startled even the beautiful Georgina's great-great-grandson. Taglioni, the creator of *La Sylphide*, died of course when Fokine, the creator of *Les Sylphides*, was just four.

The confusion of the two titles is frequent enough, but it seemed a nice irony that the error should have crept into the Sunday paper for which Buckle himself used to be ballet critic.

A new explanation

WHILE we are on the subject of Sylphides, I thought that I had heard every possible "explanation" of these supernatural ladies, but Gary Burne, of the Royal Ballet, has just told me a new one. When he and Merle Park were in their

native Southern Rhodesia earlier this year, they gave a performance specially for an African audience. This included extracts from *Les Sylphides*, and one reviewer wrote eulogistically of the skill with which "the dancers imitated pieces of tissue paper blown in the wind".

Now I come to think of it, I once remember Robert Helpmann turning into a piece of newspaper blown in the wind in that *Red Shoes* film — perhaps he was really turning into a male Sylphide!

Operation Lac

MANY readers will have noticed with some amusement that the Prime Minister went to Cyprus recently to see *Swan Lake*. The cast was the strangest ever — the British Army. But if you have visions of British tommies *bouréeing* about and getting up into *arabesques* and *attitudes*, then you are wrong. "Swan Lake" was, of course, the code name given to a military operation — and if the purpose of such names is intended to be completely misleading, then this one must have been ideal.

More Royal mishaps

ACCIDENTS to dancers on stage are fortunately rare. This made all the more startling the occasion, last month, when Julia Farron slipped and hurt herself during a performance of *Daphnis and Chloë*. Although obviously in great pain from her right arm, she completed the ballet, but it is likely that she will not be dancing for some weeks as a result of the bruises. During the performance, I particularly admired the quick-witted way both Fonteyn and Somes modified their rôles so as to help their injured colleague as much as possible.

As if a car smash and an injured face were not enough for one year, poor Frederick Ashton has just had an added misfortune. He was recovering nicely from his previous injuries when he contracted shingles in the face. This extremely painful complaint has made his path to *Undine* even more difficult than it should have been.

Not so new as it seems

SO much of the publicity for the Edinburgh International Ballet has centred on the fact that all the ballets are new. Much as I welcome the company's enterprise, it is only fair to point out that this is not the unique achievement that its admirers seem to think. The New Ballet Company, formed a few years ago, did exactly the same thing but without the benefits of the Edinburgh Festival's prestige, financial support and splendid publicity service. Because of the lack of money and publicity, the New Ballet Company failed to establish itself in spite of some fine work by various choreographers and dancers. I hope that its more richly endowed successor will be more fortunate.

Concert pioneering

WHEN Beryl Grey and Oleg Briansky dance extracts from *Swan Lake* at the Albert Hall on October 19, they will be following Markova's example and pioneering in this country a form of entertainment already familiar and vastly popular in the United States. What they will do is not a dance recital but simply the equivalent of an instrumental soloist's normal part in an orchestral concert. Victor Hochhauser, who is presenting the concert, is presumably confident that it will be popular in London. But I imagine the idea could be more valuable elsewhere in the country where it would be possible for towns with a concert hall but no theatre to see, at least, leading dancers in reasonably good conditions.

No quarrel for Margit

WHEN she left England recently Margit Müller, who escaped from Hungary and joined Festival Ballet, made a statement to the press that she had had no disagreement with Dr. Braunsweg or with Anton Dolin. She only left, she said, so that she could gain wider experience. The first stage in her gaining this experience was to dance in a recital with Anton Dolin, Krassovska and André Prokovsky at St. Helier in Jersey. After that she took over from Marina Svetlova for a few weeks dancing *The Dying Swan* twice nightly in a revue in Bournemouth. Later, Müller will appear in a recital to open the Autumn season of the Hintlesham festival. Some time in the near future she will be marrying a man, a Hungarian refugee like herself, now in Holland. She tells me that she also plans to dance in *The Nutcracker* and *Giselle* with various European companies. Well, it seems that the experience to be gained from all this will be varied — to say the least.

From all over

MARGOT FONTEYN and Michael Somes are to visit Japan on their way to dance with the Royal Ballet in New Zealand next year. When Nora Kaye appeared there they declared a Nora Kaye Day, whatever that might mean. No doubt they will also declare a Dame Margot Day.

NOELLE ADAM's visit to New York with the *Broken Date* was more successful to herself than the fate of the show (it was withdrawn at the end of its second week). Noëlle gained some benefit from the trip because she became engaged to Sydney Chaplin, son of the famous Charlie.

A DATE which *you* must not break in the Autumn is a visit to the new full-length colour film of the Bolshoi Ballet's *Swan Lake*. It features Maya Plisetskaya, and may be the one opportunity you will have of seeing this great Bolshoi ballerina who never seems to come with the rest of the company to Western Europe.

MANY dancers marry dancers but not so many marry conductors. In fact, you should ask *some* dancers what they think of *some* conductors; the answer would make the air blue. However, Veronica Waggett, of the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet, thinks otherwise, because she is to marry Alexander Gibson, the popular young musical director at the Wells.

happy birthday to...

David Kerval	Canadian National Ballet	25
Diane Elesmore	London's Festival Ballet	26
Norman McDowell		26
Patricia Neary	Canadian National Ballet	27
Elaine Fifield		28
Louis Godfrey	London's Festival Ballet	29
Patricia Thorogood	Royal Ballet I	29
Lawrence Gradus	American Ballet Theatre	30
Serge Golovine	De Cuevas International Ballet	30
Janet Overton	London's Festival Ballet	30
Michael Maule		31
		November
Selina Wylie	London's Festival Ballet	1
Audrey Harman	Royal Ballet organisation	2
Lawrence Adams	Canadian National Ballet	2
Carmen Matheson	De Cuevas International Ballet	3
Antonio		4
Donald McAlpine	London's Festival Ballet	4
Violetta Elvin	In retirement in Italy	4
Elaine Crevier	De Cuevas International Ballet	9
Dianne Richards	London's Festival Ballet	13
Frances Greenwood	Canadian National Ballet	13
Antonio Gades	Pilar Lopez Ballet Espagnol	16
David Adams	Canadian National Ballet	16
Dimitri Romanoff	American Ballet Theatre	17
Anne Heaton	Royal Ballet II	19
Hylda Zinkin	Royal Ballet I	19
Leila Zorina	Canadian National Ballet	19
Patricia Richards	American Ballet Theatre	22
Marie Fredericksz	De Cuevas International Ballet	23

Dancer You Will Know

AS A BLUEBIRD *Photo: Roy Round*

ANTOINETTE SIBLEY

Born in 1939 in Bromley, Kent. Started to dance at the Arts Educational School in 1944, and went to the Royal Ballet School in 1949. Made her stage début as a swan in Swan Lake *in January 1956. Joined the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden in July of the same year.*
Creation: (for Sunday Ballet Club) Dancer in Quatre en Rouge. *Rôles:* Pas de Six *in* Giselle; *Friend in* Coppélia; *Blue Bird, Crystal Fountain Fairy and Red Riding Hood in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Peasant Girl and Cygnet in* Swan Lake; *Scotch Rhapsody in* Façade.

ON a dull night in January, 1956, Margot Fonteyn danced Odette/Odile, making her first stage appearance since she had had become a Dame of the British Empire. On that memorable occasion young Antoinette Sibley took her first tremulous flutter on the Covent Garden stage as the most junior of the attendant swans on the great Swan Queen. With more — but perhaps not so much more — than a little bit of luck the occasion *could* become historic.

Among all the present *corps de ballet* she is quite clearly the most obvious ballerina prospect yet to emerge. If she can only maintain the high promise held out by her Blue Bird *pas de deux* she should have no difficulty in ascending the gradual promotion ladder that eventually leads to listed-ballerina. She might even go further.

She has all — well, nearly all — the virtues. Eloquent arms, supple neck, musicality, instinctive carriage, and apparently the right nervous disposition to leave her unawed by the big occasion. The next five years should tell whether she has the qualities beyond the text-book to lead her to the top.

STEPS OF THE DANCE 34

by

BARBARA VERNON and JOHN GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

Centre Work: ALLEGRO — contd.

BALLONNE: is a light springing step that commences with a brushing out movement from 5th position *en plié,* or more effectively from *coupé.* With the push from supporting leg, the working leg is thrown *en l'air* to the height of supporting knee. With the lift into the air both legs stretch fully giving the feeling of being momentarily suspended in the air. Landing again *en plié* the working leg is brought sharply into the *cou de pied. Ballonné* may travel in all directions, forwards, sideways, backwards, *en effacé, en croisé, en ecarté* and *en tournant.*

BALLONNES PASSES DERRIERES AND DEVANTES: From 5th position *en plié, coupé* with back leg simultaneously throwing front leg out to the side *en l'air*; the supporting leg stretched *en l'air* directly beneath the body. With the landing on supporting leg *en plié,* the working leg closes *cou de pied* behind! from the landing another push is taken again throwing working leg *en l'air* to the side, this time closing with the landing to *cou de pied* in front. The arms which commenced with forward arm in 2nd position, and other arm in 4th position reverse positions (travelling forwards and round) with the first *ballonné,* and travel back again to original positions with the second *ballonné.*

BALLONNES EN EFFACES AND EN CROISSES FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS: The *Ballonné* movement is performed as previously described; the form, position of arms, head, and *epaulement* is the same as described for *Assemblés.* (See Article 30.)

BALLONNE EN TOURNANT: In which the *Ballonné* is executed with a complete turn in the air. *Ballonné* with the full turn is a difficult movement, and is not often performed. The same principles must be observed as for the simple *Tour en l'air.*

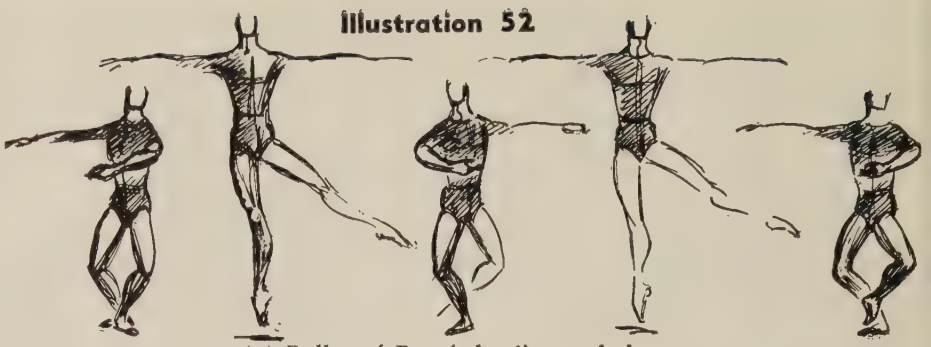
BALLONNE WITH DEMIE-TOUR EN DEHORS: From 5th position *en croisé en plié,* forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position; *coupé* with back leg, gliding out front leg to the side *en l'air.* With the push from the *coupé* the body turns towards the extended leg which is held momentarily during the turn in the *à la seconde.* With the landing on supporting leg *en plié,* the working leg closes to *cou de pied* behind. With the turn the arms travel to reverse positions so that the arm corresponding to supporting is in 2nd position; other arm in 4th position. Head looking over forward shoulder.

BALLONNE WITH DEMIE-TOUR EN DEDANS: From 5th position *en croisé en plié,* forward arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position; *coupé* with back leg, simultaneously brushing out front leg to *croisé* in front *en l'air.* With the push into the air the body turns towards the supporting leg; the working leg remaining momentarily open to the same point it first opened; with the landing on supporting leg *en plié,* the working leg closes to *cou de pied* behind. With the turn the arms travel to reverse positions.

Ballonnés with *demie-tours en dehors* and *endedans* may be effectively performed in series *en diagonal.*

BALLONNE BATTU: The actual beat of the *Ballonné* is the same as the beat in *Jeté* or *Assemblé*; the relative position of the legs change after the beat. From the 5th position or from *coupé,* the working leg sweeps out to the *a la seconde* as supporting leg pushes from the floor. At the height of the jump the supporting leg is lifted fully stretched to strike the extended leg, calf to

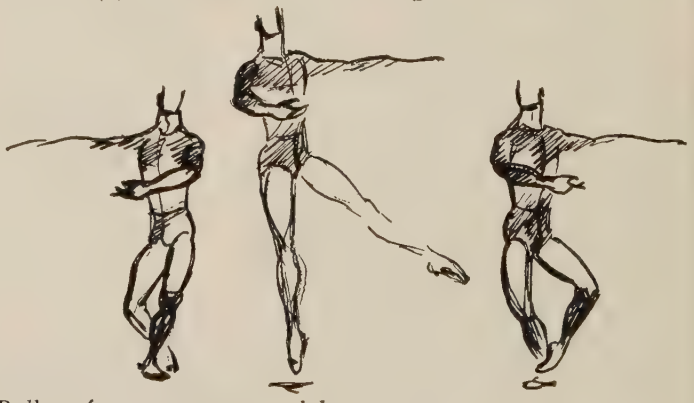
Illustration 52



(a) Ballonné Passé derrière and *devant*

(b) Ballonné en avant en croisé

(c) Ballonné en avant en effacé



(d) Coupé Ballonné Passé derrière, Ballonné en tournant en dehors

calf. The supporting leg returns to earth *en plié,* and simultaneously the extended leg closes to *cou de pied* in front or behind. When the *Ballonné* is executed with a beat the extension of the working leg will not be quite so high.

SOUBRESAUT: *Soubresaut* is a jump straight up from 5th position *en plié* in which the 5th position of the legs is maintained stretched in the air; the legs literally hugging together. The *Soubresaut* may also travel in any direction; and may revolve in the air like a *Tour en l'air,* but without changing the legs. When executing a series of *Soubresauts* it is pleasing to carry the arms up to 3rd position. Care should be taken not to lift the shoulders, or to allow the seat to protrude.

TOUR EN L'AIR SINGLE: A straight upwards jump from 5th position *en plié,* in which the body revolves once in the air. Immediately the jump is taken the legs change position in the air, front leg becoming back leg. The arms commence with arm corresponding to forward leg in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position; with the spring into the air the 4th position arm gathers towards the 2nd position arm and both are smoothly lowered to 1st position. The impetus is felt in the shoulders; the head spots front. The landing is in 5th position *en plié.*

EXAMPLES OF ENCHAINEMENTS INCORPORATING BALLONNES:

	Counts
(1) *Glissade derrière*	And 1,
Jeté derrière	„ 2,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné Passé derrière	„ 3, and 4,
Coupé dessous—Assemblé dessous	„ 5 „ 6.
Repeat on other side.	
(2) *Sisol Tombé en efface*	„ 1,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné Passé derrière	„ 2 „ 3.
Coupé dessous—Tombé en croisé en avant	„ 1,
Coupé dessous—Assemblé en croisé en avant	„ 2 „ 3.
(3) *Sisol Tombé en effacé*	„ 1,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné en effacé en avant	„ 2,
Sisol Tombé en effacé	„ 3,
Coupé dessous—Assemblé dessous	„ 4.
Repeat on other side.	
(4) *Glissade derrière*	„ 1,
Jeté derrière	„ 2,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné Passé derrière	„ 3, „ 4.
Diagonal step travelling one way.	
(5) *Glissade derrière*	„ 1,
Jeté derrière	„ 2,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné Passé derrière	„ 3, „ 4,
Coupé dessous—Ballonné en tournant en dedans	„ 5 „ 6.
Repeat on other side.	

(e) Tombé Ballonné et tournant en dedans

The System which reproduced Maryinsky ballets

NEW BOOKS

ALPHABET OF MOVEMENTS OF THE HUMAN BODY, by V. I. Stepanov. Limited edition of 175 copies. (The Golden Head Press, Cambridge. 42*s.*)

WRITING on dance notation in 1760, Noverre complained that the art was very imperfect. "It indicates," he wrote in his *Lettres sur la Danse et les Ballets,* "with exactitude the movements of the feet only, and if it shows us the movements of the arms, it orders neither the positions nor the contours they should have. Again, it shows us neither the attitudes of the body nor its effacements, nor the oppositions of the head. . . . I regard it as a useless art, because it can do nothing for the perfection of our own."

In 1891, a commission of the Imperial Ballet Company of St. Petersburg reported that a system of writing down ballets by means of musical signs first invented by one of the artists, Vladimir Stepanov, had been examined by a special commission and tested in practice. The report concluded: "Considering that up to the present no convenient means or system for the notation of ballets existed, the Commission is of the opinion that the new system fills the gap and will render valuable services to the art of choreography." Such illustrious signatures as those of Petipa, Ivanov, Johannsen and Gerdt appeared on this testimonial.

Stepanov's system is certainly practical. It was by it that the late Nicholas Sergueyev was able to reproduce *The Sleeping Beauty* and other Imperial ballets for Diaghilev and, more recently, for English companies. In *Theatre Street* too, Karsavina described how lessons in the system were given at the Imperial School.

This English edition has been most expertly translated from the French edition of 1892 by Raymond Lister. The book is, however, no more than a skeleton key showing the general principles and their application, and, as the translator himself suggests, one can see many possible refinements. Its sub-title is "A study in recording the movements of the human body by means of musical signs". Musical notes describe not only the duration and rhythm of movements, but also their character.

Three horizontal staves are used — the first of two lines for the head and torso, the middle stave of three lines for the arms, and the lower stave of four lines for the legs. Two forms of notes are written on the staves — in the conventional round form to indicate jumping and gestures in the air, and in an oblong form to show contact with the ground.

To indicate a movement of the right leg or arm a treble note is used, while to indicate a movement of the left leg or arm a base (or inverted note) is employed. Each stave has its clef governing the part of the body to which the stave belongs, giving the normal position and the principal movements for each part of the limb. For example, a forward movement of the left leg is written by a note on the third line (of the bottom stave); for the right by a note on the second line. Sideways movements are written by a note between the third and fourth lines for the left leg, and for the right between the first and second lines. Backward movements are written for the left leg by a note on the fourth line, and for the right by a note on the first line.

The forward, sideways and backward movements so far placed on the stave are termed first degree movements: that is the angle of movement is 45 degrees. For second degree movements at an angle of 90 degrees, three more notes in the same sequence of forward, sideways and backward movements are added on ledger lines above the stave for the right leg, and below the stave for the left leg.

If a knee movement is used this is again indicated in first, second and third degrees of bending by placing respectively across the tail of the note either one, two or three small horizontal lines. Movements of the arm are indicated along the same principle but, of course, placed on the middle stave which is for the arms.

There is also a vital anatomical element in the system. When this must be recorded the system becomes more complicated because it works on the principle of the extreme limits to which particular limbs can move without moving or displacing other parts of the body. For example, the angle of the leg movements, which are fixed at, say, a forward maximum of 76 degrees, may be enlarged if the movement is accompanied by an inclination of the pelvis.

The book is by no means always easy to follow. This is largely because an attempt has been made to adhere to the layout of the original. As the diagrams are all printed on overcrowded separate pages, one is constantly going backwards and forwards through the text in search of the relevant illustration. There also appear to be a number of mistakes, but these probably appeared in the 1892 French edition.

Nevertheless the material itself is fascinating and there are many original and ingenious ideas in the system. The publishers are to be praised for their enterprise in bringing out a translation of this long-overdue work.

E. C. M.

From the Royal Ballet Repertoire

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

Lecocq and Glazunov

Lecocq arr. Jacob: *Mam'zelle Angot* — excerpts. Glazunov arr. Irving: *Birthday Offering*. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Robert Irving). HMV CLP 1140. 12 in. 35*s*. 10*d*.

LECOCQ and Glazunov were both content to speak the musical language of a successful older contemporary — the operettas of the Frenchman could not unfairly be described as suburban Offenbach, the Russian's ballet music as heartless Tchaikovsky — yet each achieved a personal accent and made the utmost of his considerable, though limited, talents.

The music for Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, so tastefully chosen and put together by Robert Irving, gathers together some of Glazunov's most distinctive and elegantly-wrought trifles to make a perfect accompaniment for an aristocratic display-piece. In this first complete recording far more of the music's grace and glitter comes through in the Royal Philharmonic's playing than we are accustomed to hearing in actual performances of the ballet.

The selection from *Mam'zelle Angot*, giving slightly more than half the complete score, comes as a welcome replacement for the earlier HMV recording of excerpts by the Covent Garden Orchestra under Rignold. The new performance conveys Lecocq's gay exuberance without any suggestion of the slap-dash routine in the playing that in the past has so often taken the sparkling edge off Gordon Jacob's orchestration. Irving makes the music sound so fresh and captivating that it seems a pity that so much had to be omitted; though a complete *Mam'zelle Angot* on records would probably have been too much of a good thing, as even in the theatre the work does tend to outstay its welcome. Recording on both sides is beautifully clear and balanced.

Sullivan Ballet

Sullivan arr. Mackerras: *Pineapple Poll*. Pro Arte Orchestra (John Hollingsworth). Pye CML 33000. 12 in. 39*s*. 11½*d*.

A FINELY played but rather restrained *Poll* that does not capture the spirit of the ballet with quite the verve of the previous recorded performance on Columbia, conducted by Mackerras, who as well as making the arrangement suggested the idea of a Sullivan ballet to Cranko in the first place. As Joan Lawson points out in her sleeve-note for this new Pye release, "It was Charles Mackerras' superb sense of timing that so animates both orchestra and dancers whenever he conducts a ballet, which has given his score of *Pineapple Poll* such tremendous swing and zest".

Yet if the new performance lacks something of the rhythmic vitality and alert attack of Mackerras' own, the quality of the recording is in any case so superior to the Columbia, which was made as long ago as 1951, that the Pye must be given pride of place. Presumably we shall soon be offered a stereophonic edition of the same performance, which should make the old one sound even more outdated. Hollingsworth's performance will do very well indeed, but EMI might well consider asking Mackerras to re-record the ballet.

Weldon's Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty*. Philharmonia Orchestra (George Weldon). Columbia 33SX 1095-6. 2 12 in. 71*s*. 8*d*.

THE wording on the sleeves, "The Complete *Sleeping Beauty*," is misleading, for what is omitted adds up to over half an hour's playing time — a not inconsiderable amount of music! The selection actually corresponds with the version of the score used for the Royal Ballet's production, as was also true of Irving's two-disc HMV set, which is down for deletion at the end of September. One minor difference in content is that Irving omitted the Gold Fairy's variation, used by the Royal Ballet for the Prince's last-act solo, which Weldon includes, substituting it for the Prince's variation Tchaikovsky actually wrote. Also, the new performance leaves out the Cavaliers' Dance in the Prologue.

The performance has the benefit of some superb playing by the Philharmonia and an excellent recording, but Weldon's fondness for sluggish tempi makes it impossible to recommend the discs. Many of the dances are taken so slowly that the effect is ludicrous and in addition the conductor displays throughout little feeling for the score's drama and brilliance.

Irving's performance, though by no means ideal, is definitely preferable if you want the "complete" score as given by the Royal Ballet. Dorati's Mercury recording on four discs (absolutely complete but for two minor cuts) is expensive but indispensable to the serious ballet collector. Monteux's marvellously conducted single disc of highlights on RCA RB 16063 can be warmly recommended to the less opulent or those content with a shorter selection.

Sylphs and Cadets

Chopin orch. Anderson and Bodge: *Les Sylphides*. J. Strauss arr. Dorati: *Graduation Ball*. Boston Pops Orchestra (Arthur Fiedler). RCA RD 27077. 12 in. 37*s*. 6½*d*.

THESE are the same performances as those formerly available on HMV CLP 1114, which I reviewed in August, 1957. The issue rights have now passed to the Decca group, and in its RCA form the disc has a new sleeve design and note, and there is a marked difference in the sound of the recording, now more brilliant than before but with a rather unpleasant steely edge to the string tone.

Fistoulari's complete performance of the ballet on LXT 2848 is more ingratiating and much more likely to give lasting pleasure — the present one is abridged and substitutes the *Night in Venice* Waltz for the Sylphide and the Scotsman *pas de deux*. The performance of *Les Sylphides*, which includes an additional waltz never used in the ballet, is singularly lacking in atmosphere, though there is no recording of this popular score, oddly enough, that can be called completely successful. Efrem Kurtz and the RPO could almost certainly be relied upon to provide the magical performance so badly needed.

Delibes Rarity

Delibes: *La Source* — excerpts. Chopin orch. Douglas: *Les Sylphides*. Paris Conservatoire Orchestra (Peter Maag). Decca LXT 5422. 12 in. 39*s*. 11½*d*.

A MOST intriguing selection from Delibes' music for Saint-Léon's *La Source* (first produced at the Paris Opéra in 1886), coupled with yet another recording of *Les Sylphides*, the performance of which sounds disinterested and under-rehearsed. The Paris Conservatoire Orchestra's playing of Delibes is another matter altogether, showing a sensitive and lively appreciation for the music's piquancy and charm.

Only part of *La Source* was by Delibes — Act 2 and the first scene of Act 3. The remainder — Act 1 and the second scene of Act 3 — was by Minkus. This selection consists of the major part of Delibes' contribution, including, incidentally, several sections which Ashton incorporated into his production of *Sylvia*. There is little enough suggestion of exotic colouring in the music to indicate that the action was based on an Oriental fairy-tale, yet it is easy to understand why *La Source* won the young composer an overnight reputation as an outstandingly gifted ballet composer. If only the other side of the record had been devoted to a selection from Minkus's contribution!

MARGOT FONTEYN in the title rôle and Alexander Grant as the Barber in Massine's Mam'zelle Angot, *to Gordon Jacob's arrangement of music by Lecocq, recorded on a new HMV disc reviewed this month.*

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET (I) at Covent Garden

A distinguished visitor

THE guest appearances of Yvette Chauviré, France's greatest ballerina, have proved to be the happiest and most successful of any given by the Royal Ballet's foreign guests. I think that they have been of the utmost benefit to the company as a whole for artistry such as she brought is bound to effect even the most influence-proof members of the company. At the time of writing I have seen her in *Giselle, Le Lac des Cygnes* Act 2 and *Les Sylphides.*

How idiotic it is to compare great ballerinas in *Giselle* because each bears a personal stamp which is what makes her a person apart from the rest. Markova is the true Romantic, Ulanova the realistic, and if any word could be applied to Chauviré's Giselle it is histrionic. It is the most eloquent I have ever seen. She makes not one move upon the stage that is without meaning. Hers is an interpretation from the head and the heart. The heart can give a depth of emotion, but it is the head which controls emotion so that it does not become untidy.

In the first act she is a simple peasant who has acquired refinement, already touched slightly by the wili legend which her mother must have dinned into her from early youth. She adores Albrecht and her trust in him is complete, and all the early part of the act is played to him rather than the audience. Her every thought, when she is given the necklace by Bathilde, is crystal clear; here is a present the like of which she had never dreamed and her affections become slightly divided — between the noble donor and the man she loves. When she dances her variation it is *to* the villagers, slightly showing-off perhaps in two brilliant swift *pirouettes* in *attitude,* but the natural reaction of a girl who is intensely happy. The only hint of disaster came with a sudden heart palpitation which was so unexpected that it must have caught most people unawares. When the blow finally comes her disintegration is complete and I, who can now only judge these mad scenes by the way they affect me, found myself deeply moved. Her second act was interesting in that the character of the first-act Giselle still lingered on in the novice wili and there were still references to various incidents and movement which had gone before. Hers is possibly the most complete all-through performance to be seen today. Of her dancing I shall have more to say later.

Alexis Rassine's Albrecht was completely unobtrusive and adequate. It added little to Chauviré's performance but then neither did it detract from it. Frankly I can remember little about it except that his variation was not distinguished. With regard to male dancing, all honours went to Brian Shaw in the peasant *pas de deux.* This season he has danced better than I have seen him for years and both his variations were classicism at its highest level. He danced with Maryon Lane, who was a little below her best. Mention should also be made of Gerd Larsen, who as Berthe, Giselle's mother, has developed this rôle into the best interpretation given by the Royal Ballet. Her collapse on to a seat, in Giselle's dying moments, was worthy of that great Danish mime Gerda Karstens.

A few nights later Chauviré brought her histrionic qualities to Fokine's abstract *Les Sylphides.* Here I am not quite sure that she was right because she seemed to be playing the mischievous sylph in *La Sylphide.* A new approach certainly, and an interesting one, but I would not advise anyone else to emulate her.

As Odette in the second act of *Le Lac des Cygnes,* Chauviré's mime about her mother's tears was the most eloquent I have ever seen. This passage, usually so meaningless, really gives the clue to the whole situation. In the *adage* she was not so successful owing to sloppy partnering by Rassine and her variation was not particularly impressive but then I have rarely seen anybody impressive in this variation, which is one of the weakest that Ivanov ever thought up. But in the end of this act she was magnificent; she held a position on point, when she is on the O.P. side of the stage, for what seemed hours. Her farewell to Siegfried had all the heartbreak of great tragedy — she tried to resist the power of Von Rothbart and return for one more kiss finally to be led away a broken creature. With her the swan-princess metamorphosis seemed more plausible than usual as the sweeping arms of the swan's wings gradually became the human arms of the princess.

As a dancer, Chauviré has the physical disadvantage of a short neck, and this makes her look short all through — shorter dancers than her can look quite tall on the stage if they have long necks. She has a beautiful line but a tendency to go up into a movement too abruptly—it is the sensitive way she comes down from a movement that makes her dancing so remarkable. She uses her arms wonderfully — sometimes they encircle her head and sometimes when they are straight she turns her palms outwards so that the whole line of the arm makes a perfect and relaxed composition with the rest of her body. There is no strain anywhere in her work. She turns well, her *bourées* are smooth and she has remarkable *équilibre* which, like Margot Fonteyn, she holds for the precise amount of time and never turns it into a trick. She uses her head well, turning it so that it too falls into a perfect composition with the rest of her body. But it is her remarkable interpretative powers which have made her visit to the Royal Ballet a unique occasion, and I can only hope, now the ice has been broken, that she will make many return visits. But let us hope that she, and any other stars who visit us, are greeted by something more worthy than the scratch "band" and sluggish conducting which have accompanied the Royal Ballet all through this late-summer season. **P. W.**

Two Auroras and some others

THE season had opened on August 18 with Fonteyn and Somes in *The Sleeping Beauty.* Fonteyn's birthday princess in the Rose Adagio can hardly ever have been better. She was spontaneous and exultant, and her phrasing of the music was worthy of better support than Hugo Rignold and the Covent Garden orchestra could apparently provide. In the following two acts she failed to live up to the quite exceptional promise — even for her — which this first act had offered; possibly she, like us, had been listening to the orchestra. Somes, also, was just a little below his peak form, and even the addition of multiple *pirouettes* between the fish-dives of the *grand pas de deux* could not entirely make up for its comparative lack of sheen. In fact, they were merely excellent, and have only themselves to blame if they have led us to expect more.

Brian Shaw gave a superlative account of the Blue Bird, his exquisitely arched *temps de poissons* cutting through the air with exhilarating ease. Annette Page also danced well as his partner.

On the following Saturday evening, August 23, Svetlana Beriosova danced Aurora partnered for the first time by Bryan Ashbridge. Last season — apart from a sensitive portrayal in *Giselle* — her performances in the classic repertory had shown, if not an actual falling-off, at the very least a most marked lack of falling-on. But at this performance any past disappointments could readily be forgotten and forgiven, for she was dancing with a strength, breadth and comprehension that almost represented the complete fulfilment of our very earliest hopes. Hers was the sort of dancing one expects from a fully mature ballerina.

She was surprisingly helped considerably by the sympathetic partnering of Bryan Ashbridge; I say surprisingly because he gave far more assurance and authority to the Prince than one would expect from a first performance. His mime proved clear and dignified, even though he must try to avoid a slight tendency to "mouth" words for emphasis. His self-effacing partnering had style, and it was most unfortunate that having slightly fluffed the second fish-dive in the final *pas de deux* both dancers not unnaturally lost their initial confidence in one another. The Prince's variation does not give anyone much of a chance to shine, yet Ashbridge produced a very respectable account of it. What was most interesting about the new partnership was the evident *rapport* that already exists between the dancers, and augers well for its future.

The new junior cast (if the Royal Ballet will forgive the use of that loathed word "junior") of Fairies seen last season, all seemed to have improved, some having had more room for improvement than others. Antoinette Sibley, Doreen Wells, Shirley Grahame and Diedre Dixon have now been joined by Georgina Parkinson, a newcomer to the Fairy of the Woodland Glades. Parkinson showed a good presence, but her *pas de bourrés* were bumpy, and the lack of attention she pays to the musical beat, which so often makes her stand out in the *corps de ballet,* was unfortunately also noticeable. She is, however, a promising dancer who may prove to be more effective in solo rôles than in *ensembles*; she has since, incidentally, danced the Lilac Fairy.

The company has now also started to put out two almost completely different casts for the Fairies' Cavaliers, and these now include Petrus Bosman, John Stevens, Graham Usher, Richard Farley and Keith Rosson. Farley, a good dancer, needs to be far more careful than he is at present about his stance and walk, while Rosson requires a surer *double tour en l'air.*

The wedding breakfast cabaret of the last act also produced a small crop of newcomers. Gary Burne danced his first Florestan, clearly attempting to be more neat than has perhaps been his usual custom. The result was somewhat restrained and quite lacking his characteristic ragged brilliance, but he should soon be able to strike the right balance. Outstanding in this act were Merle Park and Peter Clegg as a brace of well-plumaged Blue Birds.

Hynd in two rôles

THE performance of *Daphnis and Chloë* on the first night of *Agon* was remarkable not only for the performances of

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Fonteyn and Somes as the bucolic lovers, but also for the first assumption of the rôle of Dorkon by Ronald Hynd. Hynd actually danced the part better subsequently, but even this first first attempt at the boorish rival for Chloë's hand was altogether exceptional. Later he danced his solo with such animal ferocity and style that for an unhappy moment it seemed as though the result of his dance competition with Daphnis would be in some doubt, but fortunately his characterisation was thorough-going enough to make his every movement brutally unpleasant. This, to my mind, is quite clearly the best portrayal the part has yet received.

Hynd's unusually mature qualities also stood out when he appeared as Ivan Tsarevitch, partnering Nadia Nerina's thrillingly danced Firebird. While not completely new to the part, it must be nearly a year since his first few appearances in it at Covent Garden, and the characterisation has admirably filled out in the meantime. Owing hardly anything to Somes's own approach to the part, it is equally successful in conveying a sense of that unusual Slav mixture of prince and *moujik* — the Russian "innocent". It says a lot for his skill that one night on his first meeting with the Tsarevna, having the misfortune to drop his hat, he picked it up with such calculated aplomb that what could so easily have looked ridiculous became an apparently natural part of the ballet. **C. B.**

NEXT MONTH: Full review of Yvette Chauviré in The Sleeping Beauty; **the revival of** Rinaldo and Armida **and various cast changes.**

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

Beryl Grey's Giselle

DURING her weeks as guest ballerina with Festival Ballet, Beryl Grey gave two performances of *Giselle* with Oleg Briansky as her Albrecht. The first of these, not attended by the press, was given on a Saturday afternoon, and the reports of it were most encouraging. The dancers were said to be weeping in the wings at the effect of her mad scene. Hopes ran high for her next performance on the following Monday, August 11.

Grey's first entrance was unfortunate — her tights, face and arm make-up were of a blanc-mange pink which combined unhappily with the yellow of her skirt and sleeves. She looked far too healthy ever to become involved in the subsequent tragic happenings.

Since we last saw Grey in this rôle with the Royal Ballet, she has been in Russia and has obviously studied what they do over there and, I would say, the work of Ulanova in particular. The trouble about this is that Grey is a tall girl and Ulanova is shortish, and small fussy little movements look all right on a short person — on a tall one they do not. Though I admire Grey for attempting to assimilate some of the present Soviet tendencies, she should have asked herself whether in actual fact they were suitable to her physique.

Although nobody could complain about the lovely breadth of her dancing she was apt to spoil her line with coy hands, she made much play with her skirt and she tried to hide from her mother behind the back of Briansky. The first act variation which Olga Spessiva once brought to Western Europe and has been given by everybody ever since, was altered and fussed-up by Grey. The simplicity of its pure classical line — and it is this variation which places Giselle as something apart from the other villagers — was therefore lost. From a dancing point of view in this act she was at her best when she danced with the villagers after the grape-inspecting scene. She spoilt her mad scene by appearing with her hair dishevelled long before there was any reason to suspect that there might be something amiss with her emotional life. Her mad scene may have had them weeping in the wings, but I am afraid we were dry-eyed in the audience and it really left no impression at all.

As Hilarion, Keith Beckett gave an extraordinarily immature performance — some of the most hectic and meaningless mime I have seen for a very long time. He also threatens Albrecht with a dagger, which is an unnecessary over-dramatic gesture for the early part of the ballet; his run off stage was more like a hysterical schoolboy than an adult. It was only Oleg Briansky, as Albrecht, who brought any real distinction to the first act. Suffering from ankle trouble and unable to jump at all he nevertheless made a noble figure. His interpretation was simple and direct and he moved like a prince, a rather rare occurrence. He made one rather unfortunate mistake in his miming — in the moment when he is supposed to turn to Wilfred and enquire where Giselle could have got the necklace, given her by Bathilde. By passing his hand across his face, instead of his neck, he actually enquired why Giselle was a beautiful girl. In every other respect, Briansky's performance was manly and commendable. The Bathilde of Pamela Hart, on the other hand, was as dumb as an overdressed show-girl from a medieval scene at the Folies Bergere — and far less exciting.

In the second act, where little acting is called for, Grey came into her own and danced with far less fuss. She is not, and never could be, an ethereal supernatural being, but it was a fine display of honest dancing. It was sad though that Briansky's ankle was obviously causing him pain because, from what it was possible to see, he carried through his sincere portrayal of the first act. But, as so often happens in this act, it was Myrthe who carried away most of the honours. Janet Overton combined a strong sense of drama with some most notable dancing, thus giving this part of the ballet its real theatrical impact.

But what has happened to Festival Ballet's *Giselle?* When it was first given at the Stoll Theatre some years ago it was one of the finest productions, apart from the sincerity of the Rambert production, to be seen in any British repertory. Today it looks tatty and Hugh Stevenson's décor has been patched up so that certain parts of it look as though they belong to another production. The company used to give it with reverence and understanding, but now what they do looks bored and tired. This ballet is, after all, one of the company's chief showcases for visiting ballerinas — and the long line of stars to have appeared with it has amounted to one of its most distinguished contributions to classical dancing of our time — surely it is worth continuing to make this production a worthy frame for them? **P. W.**

Stars not integrated

STARS may not make a company — but they certainly help! That is perhaps the main lesson to be learnt in the mildly disappointing showing London Festival Ballet have made during their summer season at the Royal Festival Hall. Since last year the company has lost Toni Lander, Belinda Wright and Flemming Flindt, and while it may be argued that their places have been taken by no less than Alicia Markova, Beryl Grey and Oleg Briansky, these latter luminaries have danced in only a few of the ballets and their influence on the standard of the general repertory work has consequently been negligible.

Solo to Liszt

Of the various guest appearances — apart from those of Carla Fracci and Marlo Pistoni at the 9th Anniversary Gala on September 9, to be fully reviewed next month — the only one not covered elsewhere is the appearance of Beryl Grey in Audrey de Vos's solo *Reverie.* Danced to the music of Liszt's 3rd *Consolation* it was a trifle, the kind of concert item that every well-dressed Soviet ballerina carries around in her choreographic wardrobe.

A young girl, who doubtless could have danced all night, is seen reclining on a *chaise longue.* After a certain amount of nostalgic yearning she gets up and dances *Le Spectre de la Rose* as a solo — quite possibly because the man who made the set forgot to put in a window! Although it sounds no more corny than it was, it was a well produced little piece, and its choreography, devised by Grey's principal teacher de Vos, showed off the ballerina's qualities to their best advantage. Her warmth, tenderness and quite unaffected sincerity made it unpretentious and rather surprisingly attractive.

Yet it seemed a pity that Grey could not have been persuaded to dance in some of the ballets of the general repertory, most particularly perhaps, in Harald Lander's festival of the *danse d'école, Etudes.* In fact Toni Lander's vacant throne has been a little uneasily taken this season by Marilyn Burr. Astonishingly she proved more successful in the ballet's romantic episodes than in the passages of pure bravura, but nowhere was she a match for the matchless Lander. The ballet's point was further blunted by the regrettable absence of Flemming Flindt to provide both spur and foil to John Gilpin. Flindt's part has been shared between Michael Hogan and André Prokovsky, and although both danced with a will, and the latter with even a glimmering of a way, the results obtained did not seem to represent a just return for the efforts expended. Nor was the rest of the company dancing the work with anything like their former zest; even John Gilpin seemed affected by the general air of apathy. Although he was as tireless and probably as brilliant as ever, he was like a monarch without a kingdom, or a dynamo without a machine.

Prokovsky in his element

Not that *Etudes* was the only ballet in which the Danes made their absence felt. Flindt was sorely missed in Dolin's exhibition piece for male dancers *Variations for Four,* although here the unbelievable virtuoso display given by Gilpin still makes it worth while. *Napoli,* however, provided a happier story. Prokovsky as Gennaro has here found his best rôle to date. His exceptional elevation and *ballon* — he quite outsoars even the far from earth-bound Flindt — together with his engagingly agreeable eagerness to please, scored a notable success. Anita Landa has improved on her earlier performances as Teresina, and the whole company thus led, reveal much of the vigour of yesterseasons.

A feature of the present season has, of course, been the rise of the young French dancer André Prokovsky, who is clearly being groomed for stardom. His performance in the Black Swan *pas de deux* with Natalie Krassovska turned out to be part good and part bad, the division between the two parts occurring quite neatly at the dancer's waist. Without any exaggeration his legs were magnificent, performing prodigies of technique that almost any

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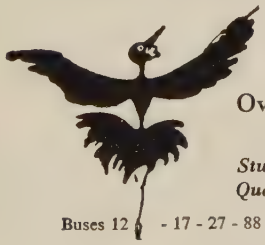

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dancer would be proud to show. Yet his arms, his shoulders, his head, his neck and his torso entered into a powerful conspiracy against his lower extremities and more than counterbalanced their effect. He also needs to learn that it is not good manners to steal a call when ushering his ballerina off after a joint curtain. **C. B.**

NEXT MONTH : Full reviews and pictures of Oleg Briansky's version of Romeo and Juliet, **the new ballet by Paddy Stone (previously called** Octetto), **and the guest appearances of Carla Fracci and Mario Pistoni for La Scala, Milan, and the new revival of Petrushka.**

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

BRAVERY is something I admire above all else — a brave bull facing a great matador is the world's most stirring spectacle — but the dividing line between bravery and foolhardiness is very slender. It was obviously brave of the Western Theatre Ballet, a young regional company centred on Bristol, to appear for a two-week season at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, but some of what they showed had the bravado of youthful inexperience.

Dances by dancers

Their first programme, for instance, opened with a work, *Impromptu,* for which the dancers themselves were responsible for the choreography. To Kabalevsky's Comedian's Suite it turned into a rare old hotchpotch — something that dancers are apt to do in the small hours at dancers' parties. It is splendid to give these sort of things at workshop performances, but I am uncertain as to the advisability of their being shown to the general public, and it started off the season in a rather amateurish way.

What a rose can do

The Enchanted Garden, which followed, is a new work by Peter Darrell to Glazunov music and for the life of me I could not tell you what it is all about. A Young Man (Jeffery Taylor) seems more interested in a rose than in his girl friend (Anne Hyde). A red light glows on one side of the stage and the girl goes towards it only to appear a few moments later dressed as a rose. After a very difficult *pas de deux* she returns to the red light quarter and the young man stamps on the real rose. The girl returns, dressed as herself, only to die in his arms.

This is obviously intended to be some sort of modern equivalent to Fokine's *Le Spectre de la Rose,* but whereas the master's work achieves impact by its telling simplicity and essentially right use of the classical vocabulary, Darrell has bogged his work down with pointless elaboration. Neither dancer was equal to the very onerous tasks they had to perform. Derek West's designs were suitably pretty though the excessive use of rose was rather indigestible — like eating a surfeit of those sugar flowers on birthday cakes.

Escape to Bartók

Darrell's next ballet, *The Prisoners,* was reviewed by Clive Barnes after the company's season at the Arts Theatre last year, and not having seen it then I expected a great deal. Unfortunately the work did not quite come up to my expectations. It is certainly dramatic, this story of two escaped prisoners and the tragic consequence of their return home — one of them falls in love with the wife of the other, who is duly dispatched, while the guest finds himself again a prisoner, this time in the home of the murdered man.

Using Béla Bartók's Music for Celeste, Percussion and Strings, Darrell has not really come to grips with this exciting and complicated score. In the opening scenes he overrides the difficulties and the music is virtually background accompaniment. Later his use is far too trite. There is no doubt about the ballet's power, but had the music and the theme been more carefully digested, *The Prisoners* could have become a work of considerable importance instead of being just better than the works surrounding it. The company gave it with great sincerity and Susanne Musitz, as Madeleine the wife, showed an unusual sense of dramatic power. It was her performance and the excellent designing of Barry Kay which realised the particular quality of Bartók far more successfully than the choreography.

Poor Pulcinella !

I cannot imagine why Elizabeth West, the company's artistic director and a lady of integrity, perpetuated such a futile version of the Stravinsky-Pergolesi *Pulcinella* which ended the programme. When Massine originally created this ballet, it had great style and a wonderful insight into the Neapolitan character and the bawdy intrigues of Commedia dell'Arte. It was a masterpiece of pastiche. Elizabeth West's version follows the Massine story closely but has not one ounce of style or understanding — a sort of Women's Institute pierrot show. Only Ronald Emblen, a fugitive from Festival Ballet, brought any sense to the work and his impish nature would make him ideal for the Massine version should the great man consider reviving it. Barry Kay achieved an apt setting which owed nothing to Picasso's masterly original — a formidable achievement.

Designer becomes Choreographer

Unfortunately I was unable to see the second programme, which included Brunner's *Girl in a Mask*, recently reviewed when it was created for Sunday Ballet Club, and Darrell's *Celeste and Celestinha,* reviewed some years ago when it was given by Philippe Perrottet's lunch-time ballet group. The third programme opened with *Tableaux Vivants* by Ronald Wilson.

Wilson, primarily a designer, is a choreographer of the Walter Gore school. This work had a dry wit and the sort of economy of movement which is always effective in the theatre. His use of the Virgil Thomson music was admirable. The various peep-show episodes ranged from musical-box figures through tangos, waltzes, a bird-cage, scenes over and under the waves, military formations, lullabys, and finally a two-step for everyone. It was unpretentious, infectious and thoroughly enjoyable, and I am at a loss to understand why this work did not open the first programme. Wilson seems to have a mature sense of the meaning of choreography.

This was followed by Darrell's *Non-Stop,* a choreographic sketch whose place is really in a Cranko basement revue. Hep-cats get in a groove in a dance hall — and they stay in a groove. Frankly I enjoyed it a lot and Hazel Merry brought a nice sleazy Hermione Gingold sense of dead-pan humour to it all.

Six characters seek exit

Impasse, which followed, is the first British ballet to *Musique concréte,* and this is its main interest. The trouble with this form of music is that unless it is created with a complete understanding of its purpose, and this means that composer and choreographer have to work closely together, it remains just noise. What Michael Hobson and Ronald Fouracre have achieved is mainly noise. It jangles the nerves and sounds mainly like all the trains in the world shunting at Clapham Junction, but it hardly fits the story of six people trapped underground and seeking separate ways of escape. Béjart's *Symphonie pou un Homme Seul* and *Haut Voltage* are the best uses to which a choreographer has put this form of music so far. Peter Darrell in his choreography has attempted too much. Having dispatched certain characters by suicide, sudden death and religious tendencies, he then finishes off the rest with an atom bomb. Tragedy is piled upon suspense and it is all too realistic — the scenery collapses and an atomic mushroom is depicted on the backcloth. The tragedy became a Grand Guignol, whereas a suggestion in the mind of the spectator could have made the work infinitely more telling. This work has been compared to MacMillan's *The Burrow,* but whereas he only suggests the horror dominating the lives and fate of his various characters, Darrell has to dot every I and cross every T. Tragedy when shown in graphic detail can easily become farce.

It was a pity that Darrell's ballet did not quite come off because there were many moments of character drawing and establishment that were admirable and the cast of six — Suzanne Musitz, Hazel Merry, Sylvia Wellman, Erling Sunde, Oliver Symons and David Hepburn — did everything in their power to make it tell. In the same way that the characters in this work are searching for exit, I find that Peter Darrell is desperately searching for some sort of signature in his work. At the moment I don't find him developing with that ascending curve which was once so noticeable in what he did for Ballet Workshop. He tends to seize upon contemporary themes and "messages" without fully applying them to a definite choreographic style. He has a considerable choreographic talent but he now needs to think

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about the direction he intends to go — having found it, he should stick to it.

Western Theatre Ballet almost boasts of the fact that they present no classics, and after having seen their attempt at the Peasant *pas de deux* from the first act of *Giselle* I can understand the reason for this omission. While few people welcome new works more than myself, I shall always believe in a few classics in any repertory because, apart from anything else, they polish up the dancers. The dancers of this company badly need polish. They are young and a little Petipa discipline would do them, and incidentally the box-office in provincial towns, a power of good. Many of the ballets seemed designed to appeal more to a London audience than to the fertile, but as yet uncultivated, territory in the West of England where the company is intended to function. The whole idea of a West Regional ballet company is admirable, but it looks as though more care and thought should go into its planning. **P. W.**

FELIKS PARNELL'S BALLET FROM POLAND

FELIKS PARNELL'S Ballet from Poland opened at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on August 11, but I was not able to catch up with the company until the beginning of the third week, when the programme, although basically the same, had been slightly changed in a few minor items. To start with the sad fact must be faced that this company seemed to do little credit either to Poland or to ballet. This was all the more unfortunate since not only are we in England well aware that there is much interesting dance activity taking place in Poland of which this company could surely not be taken as representative, but also, despite all its faults, it had some virtues which while not being particularly conducive to good art, revealed the company as being pleasant, friendly people rather outclassed in their metropolitan showcase.

The programme opened with "A ritual in seven scenes by Feliks Parnell" called *Peasant Wedding*. While this was no great shakes as a ballet, it was cheerful and lively, and within its limitations, well danced. There followed "A choreographic epic in eight episodes by Feliks Parnell" called *Chopiniana* which was not cheerful, which was not lively and which was execrably danced. It had something to do with a peasant boy (or maybe it was meant to be a peasant girl) and someone like Joyce Grenfell carrying a banner, who was supposedly the Spirit of Poland. Had it not been a rather long epic it would quite probably have been one of the best unintentionally funny ballets seen in London for a long time.

The rest of the items — and apart from these two full-length "ballets", there were eight dance miniatures or choreographic sketches — left no avenue unturned or stone unexplored in their wrong-headed search for dramatic clichés. It is always unpleasant to have to write discourteously of dance visitors from overseas, yet sometimes it becomes inevitable. This is just such a time.

There was, however, one redeeming feature. This was the presence of a really remarkable dancer, Włodzimierz Traczewski, who almost by himself justified the season. Here was a dancer in the tradition of the great Poles, the tradition that has given us Idzikowsky, Woizikowsky and so many more, to say nothing of Nijinsky, himself, who was Polish by birth. Whenever Traczewski came on stage the whole proceedings took a mighty heave for the better. Weighed down by the most ingenious banalities of choreography the sheer quality of his dancing bounced up triumphantly over all misfortunes. Principally he is a character dancer, but his classical technique is remarkably secure. His qualities of virility, style, attack and characterisation contrasted so strongly with his surroundings that it might be easy to over-estimate their worth. But despite this I feel certain in my own mind that he is, at least potentially, one of the most interesting character dancers to visit London since the war.

C. B.

APOLOGY : We regret that the photograph on page 29 of the August issue, captioned "Jeté from Sibley", was incorrect. This should have read "Jeté from Debra Wayne".

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, by Serge Lido, is of Nina Vyroubova and Serge Golovine in Serge Lifar's L'Amour et son Destin **(to the Tchaikovsky 6th Symphony) which is being given in London during the season of the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas at the London Coliseum.**

VYROUBOVA was born in the Crimea and her first studies were directed by her mother. Later in Paris she studied with Olga Preobrajenska and Vera Trefilova. In 1945 she created the principal rôle of the Sleeping Beauty in Roland Petit's *Les Forains*. In the following year she created the title rôle in the reconstruction of *La Sylphide* for Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées. After various guest appearances with a number of companies and in concerts, she joined the Théâtre Nationale de l'Opéra de Paris in 1949. Here she stayed for seven years and amongst her principal contemporary rôles were those in *Blanche-Neige, Les Noces Fantastiques, Les Mirages,* as well, of course, in the principal classics. In 1956 she left the Opéra and, in the following year, she joined the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas. There is no question that Vyroubova is one of the most eminent dancers of our generation. Not only is she a magnificent classical dancer but a remarkable interpretative artist.

GOLOVINE was born in Monaco of a Russian father and Breton mother. His first studies were with Madame Sedova in Nice. His first years as a professional dancer were at the Paris Opera in the *corps de ballet,* and it was not until he joined the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas in 1950 that he became recognised as an international star of great importance. Since then he has remained with the company, gaining in stature as a dancer over the passing years.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET I

September
15 Opera House, Manchester (2 weeks).
29 The Hippodrome, Bristol.
October
6 The New Theatre, Oxford.

at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

October
27 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes), World Première
30 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
November
1 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
4 *The Lady and the Fool, Agon, The Firebird*
6 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
7 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
8 **(M)** *The Lady and the Fool, Agon, The Firebird*
11 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
13 *Noctambules, Rinaldo and Armida, Mam'zelle Angot*
15 **(M)** *Noctambules, Rinaldo and Armida, Mam'zelle Angot*
17 *Agon, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
21 *Agon, Giselle* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
22 **(M)** *Noctambules, Giselle* (Nerina, Somes)
24 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
28 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
29 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
December
3 *Mam'zelle Angot, Rinaldo and Armida, The Firebird*
4 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina)
6 *Undine* (Fonteyn, Somes)

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

October
13 The Coventry Theatre, Coventry
20 The Gaumont Theatre, Southampton
27 The Pavilion, Bournemouth
November
3 The Palace Theatre, Plymouth
10 The Hippodrome, Bristol
17 The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford
24 The Palace Theatre, Manchester.
December
1 The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

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September
17-18 *Pas de Déesses, Death and the Maiden, L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune, Epithalame*
19 Tudor programme. *Lilac Garden, Judgment of Paris, Dark Elegies, Gala Performance*
20 **(M)** *Coppélia*
20 **(E)** *Laiderette, Two Brothers, Epithalame, Coppélia* Act 3
22 The Belgrave Theatre, Coventry.
October
27 The Gaiety, Dublin (2 weeks).
November
10 The Prince of Wales, Cardiff.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BALLET

at the Sadler's Wells Theatre

October
9 *Midsummer's Vigil, Secrets, The Great Peacock, Concerto for Dancers*
10 *Midsummer's Vigil, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Octet, Concerto for Dancers*
11 **(M)** *Midsummer's Vigil, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Octet, Concerto for Dancers*
11 **(E)** *Midsummer's Vigil, Secrets, The Great Peacock, Concerto for Dancers*
13, 14 *Changement de Pieds, Octet, The Seventh Sacrament, Secrets*
15, 16 *Circle of Love, The Night and the Silence, La Belle Dame sans Merci, Concerto for Dancers*
17 *Dreams, The Night and the Silence, Les Facheuses Rencontres, Midsummer's Vigil*
18 **(M)** *Dreams, The Great Peacock, Les Facheuses Rencontres, Midsummer's Vigil*
18 **(E)** *Dreams, The Night and the Silence, Les Facheuses Rencontres, Midsummer's Vigil*
20, 21 *Circle of Love, Les Facheuses Rencontres, The Night and the Silence, Secrets*
22, 23 *Dreams, Changement de Pieds, La Belle Dame sans Merci, The Great Peacock*
24, 25 (M & E) *Midsummer's Vigil, The Seventh Sacrament, Changement de Pieds, Concerto for Dancers*

(Programme subject to alteration; check with daily press)

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22-27 *Noir et Blanc, L'Amour et son Destin, Soirée Musicale, Le Prisonier du Caucase*
29-Oct. 4 *Les Sylphides, Le Mal du Siécle, Corrida, Diagramme*

NEXT MONTH

ANTONIO

on the front cover of the November issue of DANCE AND DANCERS.

INSIDE : Illustrated feature articles on the season of the INTERNATIONAL BALLET OF THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS; the second six creations at the EDINBURGH FESTIVAL; the London season of BALLET RAMBERT with full features on the two creations —*Epithalame* and *Two Brothers*; two creations from LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET—Briansky's *Romeo and Juliet* and the new work by Paddy Stone; new creations by SUNDAY BALLET CLUB; recent creations in France from MARIE-FRANCOISE CHRISTOUT and in America from ARTHUR TODD.

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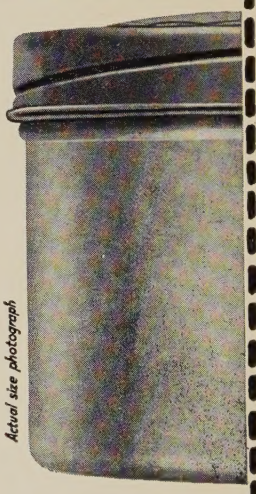
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Anyone who has seen me rehearse will tell you that my Grundig invariably comes to the theatre. And during a rehearsal you'll usually find it somewhere behind stage.

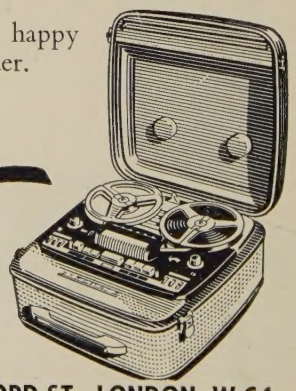
I suppose every dancer has her own methods of arriving at an interpretation of a particular role. In my case it's the Grundig. Before the first rehearsal of a ballet I play back a tape of the music to get into the mood of it, just as an actress studies her lines to get the 'feel' of a part.

It may take hours of sitting or moving about just soaking in the music—especially if the role is unfamiliar—but I find it the perfect method.

Not that the Grundig is confined to the professional side of my life. I get a great deal of pleasure from it in other ways. Music, of course, lots of music—especially Beethoven, a great favourite of mine.

But the tapes I treasure most are those of my little boy's voice. I've been making tape recordings of him since he was only a few months old. They're wonderful.

Might I just say that I've never sponsored a product in an advertisement before. I'm happy to do so here because I really do believe that everyone should have a Grundig tape recorder.



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